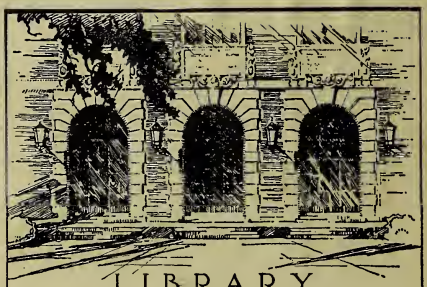

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BOOKSTACKS

THE CHRISTIAN YEAR

"Hark! hark, my soul! Angelic songs are swelling
O'er earth's green fields, and ocean's wave-beat shore!
How sweet the truth those blessèd strains are telling
Of that new life when sin shall be no more."

"Is not the pilgrim's toil o'erpaid
By the clear rill and palmy shade?
And see we not, up earth's dark glade,
The gate of heaven unclose?"

—*Second Sunday after Christmas*
(*The Pilgrim's Song*).

The St. Paul's Edition

THE CHRISTIAN YEAR

BY THE

REV. JOHN KEBLE, M.A.

With the Collects and a Series of Meditations and Exhortations

SELECTED BY PERMISSION FROM THE WORKS OF THE LATE

REV. HENRY PARRY LIDDON, D.D., D.C.L.

CANON RESIDENTIARY OF ST. PAUL'S
AND IRELAND PROFESSOR OF EXEGESIS IN THE UNIVERSITY
OF OXFORD

EDITED BY "PILGRIM"

SECOND EDITION

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PREFACE.

THERE are some books so firmly established in the esteem and affection of mankind, that even to recount their praises seems out of place. Among the few which have won this high distinction stands "THE CHRISTIAN YEAR." Those who know its soothing power, and realise the gracious charm of its gentle teaching, require no words of advice or commendation. Those who have not yet come under the spell of the book may perhaps be induced to study it for their benefit, if reminded of the wonderful influence which it has exercised over earnest men and women, in every walk of life, during nearly two generations of our race.

In this edition KEBLE'S original is presented in combination with a series of MEDITATIONS and EXHORTATIONS chosen from the Works of Dr. HENRY PARRY LIDDON, CANON OF ST. PAUL'S. The EDITOR owes it to the great kindness of this eminent THEOLOGIAN that the plan has been made possible by his permission to make these

Selections. For the passages presented and their arrangement the EDITOR is entirely responsible. They have been made with thoughtful care, and with an eye to what seem to be the peculiar needs and dangers of our time.

The title of "THE ST. PAUL'S EDITION" has been adopted. It calls to remembrance that, of late years, much of the impassioned speech and clear, trenchant thought here brought together first went forth to the world from beneath that great Dome and its golden Cross which point the heavenward way in the very centre of the busiest city on earth.

It is meet and right, indeed, that OXFORD should, from time to time, send forth from her cloister that famous student—that true son of our English Christianity, to the ancient pulpit from which his words ring through the land—that *there* the fervid eloquence and keen, logical faculty, backed by the culture of a high and rare scholarship, should be employed so effectively to rouse the sluggish, to speak words of comfort to the timorous and despairing, and also to confront and rebuke the shallow science and flippant doubt of a somewhat cynical, easy-going age.

In the spirit of that wise "reserve" which formed so marked a characteristic of the devout and humble author of "The Christian Year," the Editor would en-

deavour to say only what is really necessary in this Preface. He may be permitted, however, to state why he seeks to associate the style of "Pilgrim" with the volume.

Some forty years ago he was shown in the British Museum a curious old religious book, belonging to the earlier days of the Art of Printing. Its very title he has long since forgotten. But it had a copperplate frontispiece which he can never forget—one of those pictures which, once seen, haunt the memory for ever.

The artist of that old time had depicted, with rugged force, a poor Christian, clad in pilgrim garb, who was trying hard to stand upright on the surface of a big globe representing this world. He evidently found it very slippery footing; but he held on stoutly to a good thick rope which hung suspended from the sky. Up there it was seen to be grasped by an angel-hand, while through a rift in the cloud an angel-face gazed down upon him very encouragingly.

The engraver had managed with singular felicity to let shine through the man's wistful, anxious face an expression of mingled wonder and wariness, tempered by a certain confidence. *It sent the lesson home at a glance.*

So, now, most surely does KEBLE still "hold the rope" to a multitude of "laden souls" and "stumb-

ling feet" through the pages of his sweet and noble book. "He being dead, yet speaketh!" And the EDITOR ventures to hope that the earnest pleadings of the distinguished PREACHER whose words he has been permitted to use may bring some timely succour to the anxious, the careless, and the over-confident. May these leaves help to lead many where they can enjoy in safety "the free air of the spiritual heights!" This is the prayer of

PILGRIM.

ADVERTISEMENT TO THE ORIGINAL EDITION OF "THE CHRISTIAN YEAR."

NEXT to a sound rule of faith, there is nothing of so much consequence as a sober standard of feeling in matters of practical religion: and it is the peculiar happiness of the Church of England to possess, in her authorised formularies, an ample and secure provision for both. But in times of much leisure and unbounded curiosity, when excitement of every kind is sought after with a morbid eagerness, this part of the merit of our Liturgy is likely in some measure to be lost, on many even of its sincere admirers: the very tempers which most require such discipline, setting themselves, in general, most decidedly against it.

The object of the present publication will be attained, if any person find assistance from it in bringing his own thoughts and feelings into more entire unison with those recommended and exemplified in the Prayer Book. The work does not furnish a complete series of compositions: being, in many parts, rather adapted with more or less propriety to the successive portions of the Liturgy, than

originally suggested by them. Something has been added at the end concerning the several Occasional Services: which constitute, from their personal and domestic nature, the most perfect instance of that *soothing* tendency in the Prayer Book, which it is the chief purpose of these pages to exhibit.

May 30, 1827.

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THE CHRISTIAN YEAR.

Morning.

His compassions fail not. They are new every morning.
—*Lament.* iii. 22, 23.

Hues of the rich unfolding morn,
That, ere the glorious sun be born,
By some soft touch invisible
Around his path are taught to swell;—

Thou rustling breeze so fresh and gay,
That dancest forth at opening day,
And brushing by with joyous wing,
Wakenest each little leaf to sing;—

Ye fragrant clouds of dewy steam,
By which deep grove and tangled stream
Pay, for soft rains in season given,
Their tribute to the genial heaven;—

Why waste your treasures of delight
Upon our thankless, joyless sight;
Who day by day to sin awake,
Seldom of heaven and you partake?

Oh! timely happy, timely wise,
Hearts that with rising morn arise!

Eyes that the beam celestial view,
Which evermore makes all things new.[1]

New every morning is the love
Our wakening and uprising prove;
Through sleep and darkness safely brought,
Restored to life, and power, and thought.

New mercies, each returning day,
Hover around us while we pray;
New perils past, new sins forgiven,
New thoughts of God, new hopes of Heaven.

If on our daily course our mind
Be set to hallow all we find,
New treasures still, of countless price,
God will provide for sacrifice.

Old friends, old scenes, will lovelier be,
As more of Heaven in each we see:
Some softening gleam of love and prayer
Shall dawn on every cross and care.

As for some dear familiar strain
Untired we ask, and ask again,
Ever, in its melodious store,
Finding a spell unheard before;

Such is the bliss of souls serene,
When they have sworn, and steadfast mean,
Counting the cost, in all t' espy
Their God, in all themselves deny.

O could we learn that sacrifice,
What lights would all around us rise!
How would our hearts with wisdom talk
Along Life's dullest, dreariest walk!

[1] Rev. xxi. 5.

We need not bid, for cloistered cell,
Our neighbour and our work farewell,
Nor strive to wind ourselves too high
For sinful man beneath the sky:

The trivial round, the common task,
Would furnish all we ought to ask;
Room to deny ourselves; a road
To bring us, daily, nearer God.

Seek we no more; content with these,
Let present Rapture, Comfort, Ease,
As Heaven shall bid them, come and go:—
The secret this of Rest below.

Only, O Lord, in Thy dear love
Fit us for perfect Rest above;
And help us, this and every day,
To live more nearly as we pray.

THE CLAIMS OF PRAYER UPON OUR TIME.

A time will probably come to most of us, if it has not come to some already, when we shall wish that the hours at our command, during the short day of life, had not been disposed of as they have. After all, this world is a poor thing to live for when the next is in view. Whatever be their claims, created beings have no business to be sitting on that highest throne within the soul that belongs to the Creator. Yet, for all that, too often do they sit there. And time is passing. Of that priceless gift of time how much will one day seem to have been lost; how ruinous shall we deem our investment of this our most precious stock! How many interests, occupations, engagements, friendships—I speak not of the avowed

of "killing time," as it is termed with piteous accuracy—will then be regarded only as so many precautions for building our house upon the sand; as only so many expedients for assuring our failure to compass the true end of our existence! It may not now seem possible that we should ever think thus. Life is like the summer's day; and in the first fresh morning we do not realise the noon-day heat, and at noon we do not think of the shadows lengthening across the plain, and of the setting sun, and of the advancing night. Yet to each and all the sunset comes at last; and those who have made most of the day are not unlikely to reflect most bitterly how little they have made of it. Upon whatever else they may look back with thankfulness or with sorrow, it is certain that they will regret no omission of duty more keenly than neglect of prayer; they will prize no hours more highly than those which have been passed, whether in private or in public, before that Throne of Justice and of Grace upon which they hope to gaze throughout eternity.

THE SPIRIT OF TRUE RELIGION.

Religion is like a sacrament: it has its outward and visible signs and its inward fact, or thing signified. Of these the latter is beyond dispute the more important. Religion, the bond between the soul and God, lives in the habits or acts whereby the soul adheres to and communes with the Infinite Source of life. It is made up of faith, hope, and love, pouring themselves forth at the feet of the Invisible King; it is by turns aspiration, worship, resolve; it expends in a thousand unheard, unuttered acts, whereby the human spirit holds converse with its Creator. Sometimes it has its eye on the Divine Justice, and it is forthwith godly fear; sometimes on the beauty and per-

fection of God, and it melts into love; sometimes on the soul's manifold sins and ingratitude, and then it becomes shame and confusion; sometimes on the promises of God's mercy in Jesus Christ, and then it is repentance, contrition, self-condemnation, resolutions to amend. Religion, as it beholds the transcendent majesty of God, prompts the soul to a thousand acts of adoration, praise, and thanksgiving; it summons the angels and the saints, and the whole world of sentient and even inanimate creatures to sympathy and co-operation in the work of praise; it bids the soul offer all that it has and is to His service and His glory; it congratulates Him that He is what He is, and rejoices that any other creatures exist to set forth His praise; it desires that all may be brought to know and love Him; it is full of zeal for the advancement of His kingdom and the doing of His will. Above all, Religion is a humble and resigned temper, which sees in the ills of life the just reward of personal sin, and would take up the Cross, less from a sense of necessity than from a sense of justice. Its inmost spirit is that of the Psalmist: "A broken and contrite heart, O God, Thou wilt not despise."

CHRIST'S WORDS IN SEASON.

It is indeed pre-eminently true of the ministry of our Lord that while His human ear was ever wakened to hear as the learned, His instructions were generally directed, not to stimulate the intellect, but to solace the woes of man. His teaching indeed contained within its compass the final and authoritative solution of the chief problems that can engage and embarrass human thought. But the form of His teaching was popular as distinct from scientific, concrete rather than abstract, religious and

not philosophical. It was addressed to the wounded heart rather than to the anxious intelligence of man. Sin, actual and inherited, had made man weary of a burden which he could not bear, and in view of which life and death were alike unwelcome. And Christ our Lord, throughout His ministerial life, was the speaker of a word in season, whereby He not only gave light to them that sat in darkness and in the shadow of death, but actually guided the feet of humanity into the true way of peace.

Evening.

Abide with us, for it is toward evening, and the day is far spent.
—*St. Luke* xxiv. 29.

'Tis gone, that bright and orbèd blaze,
Fast fading from our wistful gaze;
Yon mantling cloud has hid from sight
The last faint pulse of quivering light.

In darkness and in weariness
The traveller on his way must press,
No gleam to watch on tree or tower,
Whiling away the lonesome hour.

Sun of my soul! Thou Saviour dear,
It is not night if Thou be near:
Oh! may no earth-born cloud arise
To hide Thee from Thy servant's eyes.

When round Thy wondrous works below
My searching rapturous glance I throw,
Tracing out Wisdom, Power, and Love,
In earth or sky, in stream or grove;—

Or by the light Thy words disclose
Watch Time's full river as it flows,
Scanning Thy gracious Providence,
Where not too deep for mortal sense:—

When with dear friends sweet talk I hold,
And all the flowers of life unfold;
Let not my heart within me burn,
Except in all I Thee discern.

When the soft dews of kindly sleep
My wearied eyelids gently steep,
Be my last thought, how sweet to rest
For ever on my Saviour's breast.

Abide with me from morn till eve,
For without Thee I cannot live:
Abide with me when night is nigh,
For without Thee I dare not die.

Thou Framer of the light and dark,
Steer through the tempest Thine own ark;
Amid the howling wintry sea
We are in port if we have Thee.[1]

The Rulers of this Christian land,
'Twixt Thee and us ordained to stand,—
Guide Thou their course, O Lord, aright,
Let all do all as in Thy sight.

Oh! by Thine own sad burthen, borne
So meekly up the hill of scorn,
Teach Thou Thy priests their daily cross
To bear as Thine, nor count it loss!

[1] Then they willingly received Him into the ship: and immediately the ship was at the land whither they went.—*St. John* vi. 21.

If some poor wandering child of Thine
Have spurned, to-day, the voice divine,
Now, Lord, the gracious work begin;
Let him no more lie down in sin.

Watch by the sick: enrich the poor
With blessings from Thy boundless store:
Be every mourner's sleep to-night,
Like infants' slumbers, pure and light.

Come near and bless us when we wake,
Ere through the world our way we take;
Till in the ocean of Thy love
We lose ourselves in Heaven above.

ON MEDITATION.

Many men only think of Meditation as if it were a dreamy, listless process, unworthy of those who, as men and as Christians, have a serious work to do in life. But meditation is not Tityrus lying at ease under the shade of a wide-spreading beech tree: it is David hunted for his life, yet deliberately pausing ever and anon to contemplate and praise the Divine attributes of Justice and Mercy; it is St. Paul spending three years as a solitary recluse in the Arabian desert, that he may be nerved with a Divine strength for the conversion of the world, and for his martyrdom; it is St. John, an exile and a prisoner for the name and patience of Jesus, reading in the opened heavens the coming history of the Church. Meditation is an intense act of the whole soul moving forth to welcome and to embrace truth; it is intelligence marking out the exact limits and range of truth; it is affection, embracing truth for the sake of its fair and matchless beauty; it is will, sternly resolving to

express truth in act and life. Meditation, to be of real service, ought to be just as regular and systematic as prayer; and when this is so, each of the great doctrines of the faith, each of the acts, and sayings, and sufferings of our blessed Lord, each of the means of grace, become to the soul familiar things, and not, most assuredly, despised or thought lightly of because familiar. Ten minutes or a quarter of an hour of meditation each day is not much for a Christian to give to God; but the man who gives even this knows by experience at the end of a year that he has thus acquired quite a new grasp and sight of revealed truth. He sees how impossible it is to add to it, how yet more impossible to mutilate it. Between it and all other thought there is in his mind the sharpest line of demarcation. Scripture is no longer a dead letter to him, but a "living creature." He sees in Scripture not a mere collection of documents relating to a distant time, to events and to states of mind which have passed away, but the perpetual Voice and Mind of One with whom his soul holds constant communion, and in whose light he traces with clear eye the certainty and the symmetry of the faith.

PEACE OF SOUL.

There are hundreds of persons in London who do not know what peace is, mainly because they have not enough, or rather anything, to do. They do not know how to get through the day, much less the week. They may have at command money, friends, amusements. But these things do not really secure peace of soul. And many a working man, who does not know how to get into the day what he has to do, supposes that the condition of these idle people is a thing to be envied. No

mistake can well be greater. Depend on it, work guarantees the peace of the soul, because the soul must be active in some way, and work secures healthy action. The man who has no regular occupation has his mind and heart full of restless, impracticable, morbid thoughts and feelings which are fatal to peace. "The happiest days of my life"—they were the words of one of the wisest of men—"have been those in which I have had most work to do, with fair health and strength to do it."

LIVING WATER.

As we dwell on the figure which our Lord employs, it suggests vividly to us the characteristics of His gift; for a well of living water is, in the first place, always fresh. It does not stagnate, like rain-water; it does not become brackish or foul. The new supplies which, minute by minute, burst upwards from the soil, keep it pure and clear. So it is with Jesus Christ. History is a great storehouse of buried memories, some of which are galvanised into a momentary life by our antiquaries, but which soon die away from the grasp of memory, since they belong to a past age, and do not answer to our wants or correspond to our sympathies. But, eighteen centuries ago, One appeared who spoke words which have the same incisive and trenchant force, the same exquisite and mysterious attraction, as if they were the novelties of yesterday. His several actions, His life as a whole, speaks to this nineteenth century as it spoke to the first, provoking sharp hostility now as then, but then as now winning its sure way to empire over true hearts. He is, in short, ever fresh and young, and such as He is in history, such is He also within the sanctuary of the soul. In that vast treasure-house of the dead, the human soul, amid

all that there is stagnant, amid all that belongs to the irrevocable past, amid all that bears upon it the marks of advancing change and corruption, amid the thoughts which pall, the memories which depress, the forms of feeling which once quickened within us, the highest, the most subtle enjoyment, but which have long ceased to move, or which are aroused into a moment of life only to create something like a positive repugnance, there is (I dare to say it) for Christians one thought which is ever fresh, one memory which is ever welcome and invigorating, one train of feeling which kindles within the soul into a burning tide of the keenest and the purest passion. It is the thought, the memory, the love of our Lord and Saviour.

Advent Sunday.

Now it is high time to awake out of sleep: for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed.—*Romans* xiii. 11.

Awake—again the Gospel-trump is blown—
From year to year it swells with louder tone,
From year to year the signs of wrath
Are gathering round the Judge's path,
Strange words fulfilled, and mighty works achieved,
And truth in all the world both hated and believed.

Awake! why linger in the gorgeous town,
Sworn liegemen of the Cross and thorny crown?
Up from your beds of sloth for shame,
Speed to the eastern mount like flame,
Nor wonder, should ye find your King in tears,
E'en with the loud Hosanna ringing in His ears.

Alas! no need to rouse them: long ago
They are gone forth to swell Messiah's show:
With glittering robes and garlands sweet
They strew the ground beneath His feet:
All but your hearts are there—O doomed to prove
The arrows winged in Heaven for Faith that will not love!

Meanwhile He paces through th' adoring crowd,
Calm as the march of some majestic cloud,
That o'er wild scenes of ocean-war
Holds its still course in Heaven afar:
E'en so, heart-searching Lord, as years roll on,
Thou keepest silent watch from Thy triumphal throne:

E'en so, the world is thronging round to gaze
On the dread vision of the latter days,
Constrained to own Thee, but in heart
Prepared to take Barabbas' part:
"Hosanna" now, to-morrow "Crucify,"
The changeful burden still of their rude, lawless cry.

Yet in that throng of selfish hearts untrue
Thy sad eye rests upon Thy faithful few,
Children and childlike souls are there,
Blind Bartimeus' humble prayer,
And Lazarus wakened from his four days' sleep,
Enduring life again, that Passover to keep.

And fast beside the olive-bordered way
Stands the bless'd home, where Jesus deigned to stay,
The peaceful home, to Zeal sincere
And heavenly Contemplation dear,
Where Martha loved to wait with reverence meet,
And wiser Mary lingered at Thy sacred feet.

Still through decaying ages as they glide,
Thou lov'st Thy chosen remnant to divide;
Sprinkled along the waste of years
Full many a soft green isle appears:
Pause where we may upon the desert road,
Some shelter is in sight, some sacred safe abode.

When withering blasts of error swept the sky,[1]
And Love's last flower seemed fain to droop and die,
How sweet, how lone the ray benign
On sheltered nooks of Palestine!
Then to his early home did Love repair,[2]
And cheered his sickening heart with his own native air.

Years roll away: again the tide of crime
Has swept Thy footsteps from the favoured clime.
Where shall the holy Cross find rest?
On a crowned monarch's[3] mailèd breast:
Like some bright angel o'er the darkling scene,
Through court and camp he holds his heavenward course serene.

A fouler vision yet; an age of light,
Light without love, glares on the aching sight:
O who can tell how calm and sweet,
Meek Walton! shows thy green retreat,
When wearied with the tale thy times disclose,
The eye first finds thee out in thy secure repose?

Thus bad and good their several warnings give
Of His approach, whom none may see and live:
Faith's ear, with awful still delight,
Counts them like minute-bells at night,

[1] Arianism in the fourth century.
[2] See St. Jerome's Works, i. 123, edit. Erasm.
[3] St. Louis in the thirteenth century.

Keeping the heart awake till dawn of morn,
While to her funeral pile this aged world is borne.

But what are Heaven's alarms to hearts that cower
In wilful slumber, deepening every hour,
That draw their curtains closer round,
The nearer swells the trumpet's sound?
Lord, ere our trembling lamps sink down and die,
Touch us with chastening hand, and make us feel Thee nigh.

The Collect.

ALMIGHTY GOD, give us grace that we may cast away the works of darkness, and put upon us the armour of light, now in the time of this mortal life, in which thy Son Jesus Christ came to visit us in great humility; that in the last day, when he shall come again in his glorious Majesty to judge both the quick and dead, we may rise to the life immortal, through him who liveth and reigneth with thee and the Holy Ghost, now and ever. *Amen.*

CHRIST'S SERVICE AND PUBLIC OPINION.

When in the early years of manhood we first try to take the measure of the world in which Providence has placed us, nothing is more calculated to arrest our attention than that most energetic of all abstractions, public opinion. Public opinion is that common stock of thought and sentiment which is created by human society, or by a particular section of it, and which in turn keeps its authors under strict control. It is a natural product; it is a deposit which cannot but result from human intercourse; no sooner do men associate with one another than a public opinion of some kind comes to be. And as civilisation advances, and man multiplies the channels whereby he ascertains and governs the thoughts of his

fellow-man, public opinion grows in its strength and in its area; and men voluntarily or rather instinctively abandon an increasing district of their understandings and of their conduct to its undisputed control. It varies in definiteness and in exigency, with the number of human beings which it happens to represent: there is a public opinion proper to each village or town, to each society or profession, to a country, to a civilisation, to the world; but between the most general and the narrowest forms of this common body of thought and sentiment, there are bands and joints which weld the whole into substantial unity.

And in modern times public opinion has taken a concrete body and form such as two centuries ago was undreamt of; it lives and works in the daily press. In the press we see visibly embodied this empire of opinion, with its countless varieties and subdivisions, and its strong corporate spirit and substantial unity. We all live face to face with the press; and every man who hopes, I will not say to do much good to his fellow-men, but to keep his own conscience in moderately good order, knows that in this servant of public opinion he encounters a force with which, sooner or later, on a large scale or a small, before the world, or in the recesses of his own conscience, he may have to reckon; whether, like St. Paul, he bears a commission from heaven, or whether he only endeavours to be loyal to such truth as he knows of, chiefly or altogether concerning the things of earth.

What is the duty of a Christian towards this ubiquitous and penetrating agency? Is he to ignore or despise it in the spirit of some Stoic of the earlier school? Assuredly not. St. Paul was respectful even towards heathen opinion; he bids Christians do nothing recklessly to forfeit its favourable judgment; he shapes his phrases, not seldom,

as would a man who is guided by this instinctive deference. For, always and everywhere, public opinion must needs contain certain, perhaps considerable elements of truth. Those great moral ideas of righteousness and retribution, which are to human conduct what its axioms are to mathematical science, and which have their attestation or their echo in the depths of every human soul, do, more or less, enter as ingredients into all forms of public opinion; they secure to it a claim on respectful attention; they preserve it from the rapid disintegration which, without them, could not but overtake it. They may be grossly misapplied, or associated with wild profanity and folly, but they forbid us to treat any public opinion as wholly worthless or erroneous; they secure to it an element which is certainly from above, and which may partly shape the baser material in which it is embedded.

Are we then to place ourselves trustfully in its hands, to defer to and to obey it, at least in a Christian country, and in an age of enlightenment and progress? Is it to furnish us, in the last resort, with a rule of conduct or with our standards of moral and religious truth?

Again assuredly not. For consider how this public opinion is formed: it is practically the result of a general subscription; it is the workmanship of all the human beings who go to make up society or a section of society. Certainly the wise, the experienced, the conscientious, the disinterested contribute towards it, each in proportion to his weight and influence. But as certainly also the reckless, the unprincipled, the foolish, the selfish have their share in producing it—a larger share, the world being what it is, than their nobler rivals. In public opinion power often counts for more than character. Nero could shape opinion at Rome more effectively than Seneca. Genius, which holds itself bound by moral considerations,

is often less influential, at least for a time, than genius which mocks jauntily at the simple distinctions between right and wrong. Public opinion is, in point of fact, a conglomerate; it is a compromise between the many elements which go to make up human society—a compromise in which all are represented, but in which, upon the whole, the lower and selfish elements of thought and feeling are apt to preponderate. And, therefore, while it is always a matter of high interest to ascertain what is the verdict of public opinion on a given question, both because it represents so much and because it can do so much, this verdict will never be received by Christians as an absolute guide to truth, though it may well be a subject for respectful attention.

The same conclusion is suggested by a consideration of the vicissitudes to which public opinion is liable. It is liable to the action of disturbing causes, which betray it upon occasions into wild inconsistencies with itself. The panic produced by an unforeseen catastrophe, the fascination exerted by a brilliant writer or speaker, the apparent coincidence between some suspicion entertained by a long-cherished, perhaps unexamined prejudice and some trivial discovery or occurrence,—these things will sometimes rouse into desperate energy some one element of passion latent in the vast body of general opinion, so that it breaks with all that has hitherto restrained and balanced it, and precipitates a society upon some course of conduct altogether at variance with its better antecedents. And this liability of powerful sections of opinion to suffer from the disturbing effects of panic, must needs unfit them for the duties of guides in matters of religious and moral truth. In truth common opinion is too wanting in patience, in penetration, in delicacy of moral touch and apprehension to deal successfully, or otherwise than blun-

deringly and coarsely, with questions like these. It cannot be right to cry—

"'Hosanna' now, to-morrow 'Crucify!'"

to applaud in Galilee that which is condemned in Jerusalem; to sanction in this generation much which was denounced in that; to "adore what you have burned, and to burn what you have adored," with conspicuous versatility, merely because a large body of human beings —the majority of whom, it may be, are quite without particular information on the subject—love to have it so. To attempt to please men in this sense is most assuredly incompatible with the service of Christ.

A QUESTION FOR ADVENT.

Christ is set now, as of old, for the rise and fall of many. Religion does not save us by the mere fact of our being brought into intimate contact with it. Religious knowledge, opportunities for prayer, kind friends, good books will not help us to heaven; in any case they may act on us more ways than one. What is the case with each one of us? Are we conscious of an increasing attraction to the person of our Lord Himself, or are we conscious, say since this time last year, of a weakened desire to live near Him and for Him, of a secret dislike of prayer, conversation, spiritual reading, and other things, which are quite sure to become intolerable burdens if they do not minister to us as all that is prompted by a genuine love of Him, its minister—a true delight? Do we feel that we have conquered enemies who were formidable then, or have we fallen back under the power of enemies whom we flattered ourselves at the time we had conquered once for all? Are our motives simpler, clearer,

more uniform, or are they at best turbid and confused—a strange mixture of heavenly impulses and of earthly wrestlings, a moral compromise at the very heart of our being, in which influences that come from below are, it is too probable, steadily but surely getting the better of those which come from heaven? In short, are we falling or rising in the atmosphere of souls, in that world of spirits which angels watch with the keenest interest—that world in which our real life, whether consciously or not, is lived, in which we are preparing for an irreversible fall, or for a completed resurrection? Surely this is a question for Advent. We must, sooner or later, look the greatest of all our responsibilities in the face—our responsibility for having known whatever individually we have known of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. That is the talent of talents for which the Great Householder one day will call us most strictly to account. Christ is set for the fall or rising of each single human being. His will is that we all should rise. Do not let us baulk His gracious purposes. Rather, while I think we may, let us cling by faith, by love, by sincere repentance to His pierced hands, that we may have a part in the first, the moral resurrection, and then, by His grace and mercy, in the second, beyond it.

THE RELIGION OF EDUCATED PEOPLE.

It has indeed been said that the old phrase of "saving one's soul" has ceased to have much meaning for the religion of educated people in the present day. If this be indeed true, we can only rejoin, in all truth and sorrow, "so much the worse for the educated people." Whatever be a man's place in society or in letters, whatever his circumstances in this earthly scene, it remains

true that, to close with the offers which Christ makes to sinners, to "work out his salvation with fear and trembling," is his one most important business here. The eternal realities do not change with our intellectual fashions, and, like the laws which govern our physical frames, the spiritual rules under which men live or die are the same for all of us. The day will come when the God-fearing peasants of Devonshire or of Yorkshire will rise in judgment against the cultured irreligion of the centres of our modern civilisation: not because it is cultured, but because it is irreligion; because in the glare of its enthusiasms for the additions which it has made to the knowledge of our material home and structure, it has forgotten almost or altogether the Eternal Home beyond.

The salvation of the soul can only be treated as an old-world anachronism when it is clear either that man has no real soul, or that it does not survive death, or that if it does survive, its condition hereafter has no reference whatever to its state and actions here. If this be really meant, it is better to say so; only in that case it is difficult to see what sphere is left for religion at all. If it be not meant, then undoubtedly a variety of the gravest questions at once open before us, both as to what we have to be saved from and as to the means and conditions of our salvation. What is it to live here at all as a human being? what is it to possess, or rather to be a centre of self-reflecting thought, of self-determining will, a centre of life which under some conditions will be perpetuated indefinitely. This, when we think of it steadily and in good earnest is, next to the spiritual sight of God Himself, the most solemn, the most chastening, the most stimulating consideration that can open upon us. Let us make much of it, in the interests both of the present and the future, for the sake of God

and truth, as well as of our own lasting happiness. Let us determine to ask ourselves again and again during the coming week what in our inmost selves we really are, and next, whither we are going? Let us listen to a voice which will at times find some echo in every conscience, and which bids us, in God's name, reflect that "the things which are seen are temporal, while the things which are not seen are eternal."

THE LORD'S DAY.

The mental atmosphere of a true Christian on Sunday is, above all things, an atmosphere of worship. He may think it right and reverent to say little, but the day says to him from its early dawn, "Lift up thy heart;" and his answer is, "I lift it up unto the Lord." He knows that He has indeed "Come to Mount Sion, unto the city of the living God, and to an innumerable company of angels, and to the general assembly and church of the first-born, whose names are written in heaven, and to Jesus." The invisible world, with all its beauty and all its awe, is poured around him, and he is able to keep earthly preoccupations at bay, and to surrender himself to the influences which stream down from the throne of the Redeemer. He is in his way like St. John; in the Spirit he sees the higher and the everlasting realities; he measures earth against heaven, and time against eternity, and poor, weak man—weak and poor when at his best and strongest—against the Almighty and everlasting Creator. Sundays such as this are to human life like shafts in a long tunnel; they admit at regular intervals light and air, and though we pass them all too soon, their helpful influence does not vanish with the day; it furnishes us with strength and light for the duties which await us,

and makes it easier for us to follow loyally the road which God's loving providence may have traced for each one of us on towards our eternal home. Let us endeavour while we may to make the most of them, to lead those around us to do so in the solemn, never-forgotten conviction that as each such day passes one more step has been taken, of whatever kind, towards that destiny which, once fixed by death, is fixed irrevocably.

Second Sunday in Advent.

And when these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh.—*St. Luke* xxi. 28.

Not till the freezing blast is still,
Till freely leaps the sparkling rill,
And gales sweep soft from summer skies,
As o'er a sleeping infant's eyes
A mother's kiss; ere calls like these,
No sunny gleam awakes the trees,
Nor dare the tender flow'rets show
Their bosoms to th' uncertain glow.

Why then, in sad and wintry time,
Her heavens all dark with doubt and crime,
Why lifts the Church her drooping head,
As though her evil hour were fled?
Is she less wise than leaves of spring,
Or birds that cower with folded wing?
What sees she in this lowering sky
To tempt her meditative eye?

She has a charm, a word of fire,
A pledge of love that cannot tire;

By tempests, earthquakes, and by wars,
By rushing waves and falling stars,
By every sign her Lord foretold,
She sees the world is waxing old,[1]
And through that last and direst storm
Descries by faith her Saviour's form.

Not surer does each tender gem,
Set in the fig-tree's polished stem,
Foreshow the summer season bland,
Than these dread signs Thy mighty hand:
But oh! frail hearts and spirits dark!
The season's flight unwarned we mark,
But miss the Judge behind the door,[2]
For all the light of sacred lore:

Yet is He there: beneath our eaves
Each sound His wakeful ear receives:
Hush, idle words, and thoughts of ill,
Your Lord is listening: peace, be still.[3]
Christ watches by a Christian's hearth,
Be silent, "vain, deluding mirth,"
Till in thine altered voice be known
Somewhat of Resignation's tone.

But chiefly ye should lift your gaze
Above the world's uncertain haze,
And look with calm, unwavering eye
On the bright fields beyond the sky,

[1] The world hath lost his youth, and the times begin to wax old.—2 *Esdras* xiv. 10.

[2] See St. James v. 9.

[3] Ita fabulantur, ut qui sciant Dominum audire.—*Tertull. Apolog.*, p. 36, edit. Rigalt.

Ye, who your Lord's commission bear,
His way of mercy to prepare:
Angels He calls ye: be your strife
To lead on earth an Angel's life.

Think not of rest; though dreams be sweet,
Start up, and ply your heavenward feet.
Is not God's oath upon your head,
Ne'er to sink back on slothful bed,
Never again your loins untie,
Nor let your torches waste and die,
Till, when the shadows thickest fall,
Ye hear your Master's midnight call?

The Collect.

BLESSED LORD, who hast caused all holy Scriptures to be written for our learning; Grant that we may in such wise hear them, read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest them, that by patience, and comfort of thy holy Word, we may embrace, and ever hold fast the blessed hope of everlasting life, which thou hast given us in our Saviour Jesus Christ. *Amen.*

THE RELIGIOUS DEVELOPMENT OF INTELLECT.

The religious development of intellect is unquestionably a prominent feature of true human progress. But it is only a feature, and not the whole. When intellectual activity is substituted for moral and spiritual energy; when a man's mind is developed at the expense of his heart and of his will; still more, when he has learnt to estimate his fellow-creatures only by an intellectual standard, he deserves, I will not say active censure, but at any rate a very sincere compassion.

. . . . . .

Men perceive that a pure intellectualism is apt to fall

short even of the lowest measures of duty. When it is unbalanced by a warm heart and a vigorous will, the mere cultivation of mind makes a man alternately selfish and weak. Selfish; if, for instance, to the prosecution of a private speculation, or to the assertion of a private theory, the faith, the moral vigour, the broadest and highest interests of others are sacrificed or postponed. Weak; when the entire man is cultivated, intellect and nothing else, neither love nor resolution; when the clearness of intellectual perception contrasts grimly with the absence of any practical effort; when mental development, instead of being the crowning grace of a noble character, is but an unseemly and unproductive fungus that has drained out to no purpose the life and strength of its parent soul.

SUPERFICIAL CHRISTIANS.

Some Christians hold the faith in a very superficial way, with the very tips of their fingers, as if it were a matter of phrase and form rather than of spirit and life. They receive it indeed as a precious possession, and then they put it aside very respectfully, high up on a shelf in their minds. Now and then they take it down, once a week, just to see that it is there; now and then some vagrant bandit, in the mere wantonness of destructive enterprise, tries to take it from them, and they defend it at least with obstinate courage. But they treat it rather as if it were a precious curiosity than as a loved and revered friend. And therefore when they talk about it, they use a few set phrases which they have learned, and beyond the precincts of which they do not venture. Of the truth which these phrases guard they have no real living hold; they do not see with their mental eyes its strength or its

beauty, or the interdependence of its several parts, the necessity of each portion to the whole, the vital force which runs through it, and which carries with it the assurance of a final and world-wide victory. They are not in any sense at home with it; and the consequence is that when unbelievers or half believers hear these Christians talk about religion, they get an impression that Christians do little else than manipulate a set of phrases which they do not understand, and that "orthodoxy" is a matter which belongs rather to propriety of expression than to energetic spiritual life.

Third Sunday in Advent.

What went ye out into the wilderness to see? A reed shaken with the wind? . . . But what went ye out for to see? A prophet? yea, I say unto you, and more than a prophet.—*St. Matthew* xi. 7, 9.

WHAT went ye out to see
O'er the rude sandy lea,
Where stately Jordan flows by many a palm,
Or where Gennesaret's wave
Delights the flowers to lave,
That o'er her western slope breathe airs of balm?

All through the summer night,
Those blossoms red and bright[1]
Spread their soft breasts, unheeding, to the breeze,
Like hermits watching still
Around the sacred hill
Where erst our Saviour watched upon His knees.

[1] Oleanders: with which the western bank of the lake is said to be clothed down to the water's edge.

The Paschal moon above
Seems like a saint to rove,
Left shining in the world with Christ alone;
Below, the lake's still face
Sleeps sweetly in th' embrace
Of mountains terraced high with mossy stone.

Here may we sit, and dream
Over the heavenly theme,
Till to our soul the former days return;
Till on the grassy bed,
Where thousands once He fed,
The world's incarnate Maker we discern.

O cross no more the main,
Wandering so wild and vain,
To count the reeds that tremble in the wind,
On listless dalliance bound,
Like children gazing round,
Who on God's works no seal of Godhead find:

Bask not in courtly bower
Or sun-bright hall of power,
Pass Babel quick, and seek the holy land—
From robes of Tyrian dye
Turn with undazzled eye
To Bethlehem's glade, or Carmel's haunted strand.

Or choose thee out a cell
In Kedron's storied dell,
Beside the springs of Love, that never die;
Among the olives kneel
The chill night-blast to feel,
And watch the Moon that saw thy Master's agony.

Then rise at dawn of day,
And wind thy thoughtful way,
Where rested once the Temple's stately shade,
With due feet tracing round
The city's northern bound,
To th' other holy garden, where the Lord was laid.

Who thus alternate see
His death and victory,
Rising and falling as on angel wings,
They, while they seem to roam,
Draw daily nearer home,
Their heart untravelled still adores the King of kings.

Or, if at home they stay,
Yet are they, day by day,
In spirit journeying through the glorious land,
Not for light Fancy's reed,
Nor Honour's purple meed,
Nor gifted Prophet's lore, nor Science' wondrous wand.

But more than Prophet, more
Than Angels can adore
With face unveiled, is He they go to seek:
Blessèd be God, Whose grace
Shows Him in every place
To homeliest hearts of pilgrims pure and meek.

The Collect.

O Lord Jesu Christ, who at thy first coming didst send thy messenger to prepare thy way before thee; Grant that the ministers and stewards of thy mysteries may likewise so prepare and make ready thy way, by turning the hearts of the disobedient to the wisdom of the just, that at thy second coming to judge the world we may be found an acceptable

people in thy sight, who livest and reignest with the Father and the Holy Spirit, ever one God, world without end. *Amen.*

WHAT DOES ORIGINALITY MEAN?

Need I say that real originality is rare? In this place many of us spend our time very largely in imitating, recombining, reproducing existing thought. Conscious as we are that for the most part we are only passing on under a new form that which in its substance has come to us from others, we honestly say so; yet it may chance to us at some time to imagine that in our brain an idea or a design has taken shape, which is originally and in truth our own creation—

> "Libera per vacuum posui vestigia princeps;
> Non aliena meo pressi sede."

Those few, rapid, decisive moments in which genius consciously enjoys the exhilarating sense of wielding creative power, may naturally be treasured in memory; and yet even in these how hard must it be to verify the assumed fact of an absolute originality! We of this day find the atmosphere of human thought even more than the surface of the earth preoccupied and thronged with the results of man's activity in times past and present. In proportion to our consciousness of our real obligations to this general stock of mental wealth, must we not hesitate to presume that any one idea, the immediate origin of which we cannot trace, is in reality our own? Suppose that in this or that instance we do believe ourselves, in perfect good faith, to have produced an idea which is really entitled to the merit of originality. May it not be, that if at the right moment we could have examined the intellectual air around us with a sufficiently powerful microscope, we should have detected the germ of our

idea "floating in upon our personal thought from without"? We only imagine ourselves to have created the idea because, at the time of our inhaling it, we were not conscious of doing so. The idea perhaps was suggested indirectly; it came to us along with some other idea upon which our attention was mainly fixed; it came to us so disguised or so undeveloped that we cannot recognise it so as to trace the history of its growth. It came to us during the course of a casual conversation, or from a book, the very name of which we have forgotten, and our relationship towards it has been after all that of a nurse, not that of a parent. We have protected it, cherished it, warmed it, and at length it has grown within the chambers of our mind, until we have recognised its value and led it forth into the sunlight, shaping it, colouring it, expressing it after a manner strictly our own, and believing in good faith that because we have so entirely determined its form we are the creators of its substance. At any rate genius herself has not been slow to confess how difficult it is to say that any one of her triumphs is certainly due to a true originality. In one of his later conversations Goethe was endeavouring to decide what are the real obligations of genius to the influences which inevitably affect it. "Much," said he, "is talked about originality, but what does originality mean? We are no sooner born than the world around begins to act upon us; its action lasts to the end of our lives and enters into everything. All that we can truly call our own is our energy, our vigour, our will. If I," he continued, "could enumerate all that I really owe to the great men who have preceded me, and to those of my own day, it would be seen that very little of it is really my own. It is a point of capital importance to observe at what time of life the influence of a great character is brought to

bear on us. Lessing, Winkelman, and Kant were older than I, and it has been of the greatest consequence to me that the two first powerfully influenced my youth and the last my old age." On such a subject Goethe may be deemed a high authority, and he certainly was not likely to do an injustice to genius, or to be guilty of a false humility when speaking of himself.

But our Lord's design to establish upon the earth a kingdom of souls was an original design.

Fourth Sunday in Advent.

The eyes of them that see shall not be dim, and the ears of them that hear shall hearken.—*Isaiah* xxxii. 3.

Of the bright things in earth and air
How little can the heart embrace!
Soft shades and gleaming lights are there—
I know it well, but cannot trace.

Mine eye unworthy seems to read
One page of Nature's beauteous book;
It lies before me, fair outspread—
I only cast a wistful look.

I cannot paint to Memory's eye
The scene, the glance, I dearest love
Unchanged themselves, in me they die,
Or faint, or false, their shadows prove.

In vain, with dull and tuneless ear,
I linger by soft Music's cell,
And in my heart of hearts would hear
What to her own she deigns to tell.

'Tis misty all, both sight and sound—
I only know 'tis fair and sweet—
'Tis wandering on enchanted ground
With dizzy brow and tottering feet.

But patience! there may come a time
When these dull ears shall scan aright
Strains, that outring Earth's drowsy chime,
As Heaven outshines the taper's light.

These eyes, that dazzled now and weak,
At glancing motes in sunshine wink,
Shall see the King's [1] full glory break,
Nor from the blissful vision shrink:

In fearless love and hope uncloyed
For ever on that ocean bright
Empowered to gaze: and undestroyed,
Deeper and deeper plunge in light.

Though scarcely now their laggard glance
Reach to an arrow's flight, that day
They shall behold, and not in trance,
The region "very far away."

If Memory sometimes at our spell
Refuse to speak, or speak amiss,
We shall not need her where we dwell
Ever in sight of all our bliss.

Meanwhile, if over sea or sky
Some tender lights unnoticed fleet,
Or on loved features dawn and die,
Unread, to us, their lesson sweet;

[1] Thine eyes shall see the King in His beauty; they shall behold the land that is very far off.—*Isaiah* xxxiii. 17.

Yet are there saddening sights around,
Which Heaven, in mercy, spares us too,
And we see far in holy ground,
If duly purged our mental view.

The distant landscape draws not nigh
For all our gazing; but the soul,
That upward looks, may still descry
Nearer, each day, the brightening goal.

And thou, too curious ear, that fain
Wouldst thread the maze of Harmony,
Content thee with one simple strain,
The lowlier, sure, the worthier thee;

Till thou art duly trained, and taught
The concord sweet of Love divine:
Then, with that inward Music fraught
For ever rise, and sing, and shine.

The Collect.

O LORD, raise up (we pray thee) thy power, and come among us, and with great might succour us; that whereas, through our sins and wickedness, we are sore let and hindered in running the race that is set before us, thy bountiful grace and mercy may speedily help and deliver us; through the satisfaction of thy Son our Lord, to whom, with thee and the Holy Ghost be honour and glory, world without end. *Amen.*

SEEKING THINGS ABOVE.

Thus the solemn question arises, "What do we think about?" What are the objects on which our thought rests when it is free and at our disposal? For with many of us during the working day there is, of course,

no choice as to the direction of our thoughts. We are obliged to throw them as completely as we can into our business if we mean to get through it, if we mean to satisfy our employers or our consciences, and to do our duty by those who depend on our conscientious industry. To give your mind to what you have in hand is the first condition of all good work; and we may be very sure that when St. Paul was a tent-maker, he did give his whole mind to the work of making tents, as if there was, for the time being, nothing else to be done in the wide world. But then there is a fixed hour at which business ends; and you regain, with the liberty of movement, the liberty of thought. What do you habitually think about when you make no effort to think, when thought follows its own course, as if it were a natural force—in the hours of solitude, in the hours of darkness? The question is not unimportant. For the instinctive direction which thought takes at such times may tell us much about our real selves; about the path along which we are travelling towards eternity; about the judgment which is already forming with respect to us in the Mind of God.

Is it not the case, brethren, with many of us, that at such times thought is occupied with much which, to say the least, does not guide it heavenward? It is almost at the mercy of the first claimant. It is weighted with the importunity of sense; it is dissipated or distorted by the exigencies of passion; it is darkened by resolute avoidance of the Face or even the idea of God. What mean those long periods, in lives which were surely destined for better things, in which thought persistently haunts questions and subjects which a higher judgment condemns; in which it beckons

> "Foul shapes in dream intense,
> Of earthly passion;"

in which it eagerly welcomes some work of fiction which, under the pretence of describing an historical period, suggests almost at every page that which it does not dare describe? What mean those long hours, or days, or months of sullen moodiness, in which the mind broods with desperate self-degradation over some trifling or imagined wrong; in which, as it surveys some real or supposed opponent, no excellence is recognised, and no failure unnoticed or unexaggerated; in which life is embittered for all around, but for none half so terribly as for the man himself whose thought is thus discoloured by selfish hate? Or what shall we say of those minds, too numerous, alas! in our day, who only raise themselves above the mire and dust of earth to think of God as the capricious or heartless Master of their destinies; who trace Him everywhere in life as "an austere man, reaping where he had not sown, and gathering where he had not strawed;" who would with their own hands paint clouds over the Face of the All-merciful, and then complain that He is what they themselves have endeavoured to make Him?

Christmas Day.

And suddenly there was with the Angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God.—*St. Luke* ii. 13.

WHAT sudden blaze of song
Spreads o'er th' expanse of Heaven?
In waves of light it thrills along,
Th' angelic signal given—
"Glory to God!" from yonder central fire
Flows out the echoing lay beyond the starry quire;

Like circles widening round
Upon a clear blue river,
Orb after orb, the wondrous sound
Is echoed on for ever:
"Glory to God on high, on earth be peace,
And love towards men of love [1]—salvation and release."

Yet stay, before thou dare
To join that festal throng;
Listen and mark what gentle air
First stirred the tide of song;
'Tis not, "The Saviour born in David's home,
To whom for power and health obedient worlds should come:"

'Tis not, "The Christ the Lord:"—
With fixed adoring look
The choir of Angels caught the word,
Nor yet their silence broke:
But when they heard the sign, where Christ should be,
In sudden light they shone and heavenly harmony.

Wrapped in His swaddling bands,
And in His manger laid,
The Hope and Glory of all lands
Is come to the world's aid:
No peaceful home upon His cradle smiled,
Guests rudely went and came where slept the royal Child.

But where Thou dwellest, Lord,
No other thought should be,
Once duly welcomed and adored,
How should I part with Thee?
Bethlehem must lose Thee soon, but Thou wilt grace
The single heart to be Thy sure abiding-place.

[1] I have ventured to adopt the reading of the Vulgate, as being generally known through Pergolesi's beautiful composition, "Gloria in excelsis Deo, et in terra pax *hominibus bonæ voluntatis.*"

Thee, on the bosom laid
Of a pure virgin mind,
In quiet ever, and in shade,
Shepherd and sage may find;
They, who have bowed untaught to Nature's sway,
And they, who follow Truth along her star-paved way.

The pastoral spirits first
Approach Thee, Babe divine,
For they in lowly thoughts are nursed,
Meet for Thy lowly shrine:
Sooner than they should miss where Thou dost dwell,
Angels from Heaven will stoop to guide them to Thy cell.

Still, as the day comes round
For Thee to be revealed,
By wakeful shepherds Thou art found,
Abiding in the field.
All through the wintry heaven and chill night air,
In music and in light Thou dawnest on their prayer.

O faint not ye for fear—
What though your wandering sheep,
Reckless of what they see and hear,
Lie lost in wilful sleep?
High Heaven in mercy to your sad annoy
Still greets you with glad tidings of immortal joy.

Think on th' eternal home,
The Saviour left for you;
Think on the Lord most holy, come
To dwell with hearts untrue:
So shall ye tread untired His pastoral ways,
And in the darkness sing your carol of high praise.

The Collect.

ALMIGHTY GOD, who hast given us thy only begotten Son to take our nature upon him, and as at this time to be born of a pure Virgin; Grant that we being regenerate, and made thy children by adoption and grace, may daily be renewed by thy Holy Spirit; through the same our Lord Jesus Christ, who liveth and reigneth with thee and the same Spirit, ever one God, world without end. *Amen.*

LESSONS OF THE HOLY MANGER.

Do we sometimes languidly wish that we could attain to more strength of Christian faith, and to more growth in the Christian life? May it not be, brethren, that we need to learn more fully the great lesson of Christmas Day? This shall be a sign unto us: we shall find the Divine Babe, wrapped in swaddling-clothes, and lying in a manger. Perhaps we dwell with complacency on our real or presumed good qualities, on our gifts of nature, even on our gifts of grace. Perhaps we talk easily and naturally of ourselves, of that which reflects credit on us, of that which leads others to think or talk of us. We contrast ourselves with others. We contrast our presumed virtues or talents with their presumed incapacities or faults. We find ourselves making a scientific study of the shortcomings of other persons. We are secretly pained when they are praised. We delicately suggest something which detracts from their credit. We have always a defence at hand when we are ourselves found fault with: it is a point of honour with us to hold our own and to refuse to admit that we are in the wrong. We assume an air of quiet superiority in conversation; we cultivate a judicious and elegant contempt for the opinions of the great bulk of mankind. We are quite sure that we see much farther and enjoy a much wider

intellectual horizon than is possible for others. We think much of what is public and striking; we are fascinated by great names, great employments, great promotions, great successes, great alliances. It does not even occur to us that mere human greatness is for a Christian a thing to fear or a thing to pity. We are despondent at the failure of our plans or our efforts, as though we had a divine right to succeed, and were wronged by Providence when baulked of success. We are angry at finding that we are thought meanly of, and we endeavour to force ourselves to form an equally low estimate of those who, as we hear, criticise us unfavourably. We do our works to be seen of men, or at least so as not to escape being seen of them. We prefer extraordinary tasks to commonplace and everyday duties. We have no taste for a life of secret prayer and unpublished benevolence. We shrink from labour that no eye but the eye of God surveys. Our good taste probably leads us to avoid gross acts of self-assertion or vanity, or rather our selfish instinct assures us that self-assertion carried beyond a certain point is apt, in a fastidious society, to defeat itself and to provoke unpleasant reprisals. And yet is it not only too possible to display before men that species of mechanical modesty which is the poorest counterfeit of real humility, while yet in our inner souls we breathe an atmosphere which is in its principle the very spirit of the fallen archangel?

And if this, or something like this, be the case with us, how little do we as yet know of the moral import of the Incarnation! How little are we apprised of the truth, that God has poured the condemnation and the contempt of Heaven upon all forms of creaturely self-assertion, by lowering Himself in the freedom of His omnipotence to the level of a creature's life.

St. Stephen's Day.

He, being full of the Holy Ghost, looked up steadfastly into heaven, and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing on the right hand of God.—*Acts* vii. 55.

As rays around the source of light
Stream upward ere he glow in sight,
And watching by his future flight
Set the clear heavens on fire;
So on the King of Martyrs wait
Three chosen bands, in royal state,[1]
And all earth owns, of good and great,
Is gathered in that choir.

One presses on, and welcomes death:
One calmly yields his willing breath,
Nor slow, nor hurrying, but in faith
Content to die or live:
And some, the darlings of their Lord,
Play smiling with the flame and sword,
And, ere they speak, to His sure word
Unconscious witness give.

Foremost and nearest to His throne,
By perfect robes of triumph known,
And likest Him in look and tone,
The holy Stephen kneels,

[1] Wheatly on the Common Prayer, c. v. sect. iv. 2. "As there are three kinds of martyrdom, the first both in will and deed, which is the highest; the second in will but not in deed; the third in deed but not in will; so the Church commemorates these martyrs in the same order: St. Stephen first, who suffered death both in will and deed; St. John the Evangelist next, who suffered martyrdom in will but not in deed; the Holy Innocents last, who suffered in deed but not in will."

With steadfast gaze, as when the sky
Flew open to his fainting eye,
Which, like a fading lamp, flashed high,
Seeing what death conceals.

Well might you guess what vision bright
Was present to his raptured sight,
E'en as reflected streams of light
Their solar source betray—
The glory which our God surrounds,
The Son of Man, th' atoning wounds—
He sees them all; and earth's dull bounds
Are melting fast away.

He sees them all—no other view
Could stamp the Saviour's likeness true,
Or with His love so deep embrue
Man's sullen heart and gross—
Jesu, do Thou my soul receive:
Jesu, do Thou my foes forgive:"
He who would learn that prayer, must live
Under the Holy Cross.

He, though he seem on earth to move,
Must glide in air like gentle dove,
From yon unclouded depths above
Must draw his purer breath;
Till men behold his angel face
All radiant with celestial grace,[1]
Martyr all o'er, and meet to trace
The lines of Jesus' death.

[1] And all that sat in the council, looking steadfastly on him, saw his face as it had been the face of an angel.—*Acts* vi. 15.

The Collect.

Grant, O Lord, that in all our sufferings here upon earth for the testimony of thy truth, we may steadfastly look up to heaven, and by faith behold the glory that shall be revealed; and, being filled with the Holy Ghost, may learn to love and bless our persecutors by the example of thy first Martyr Saint Stephen, who prayed for his murderers to thee, O blessed Jesus, who standest at the right hand of God to succour all those that suffer for thee, our only Mediator and Advocate. *Amen.*

THE DEATH-CRY OF THE MARTYRS.

The death-cry of the martyrs must have familiarised the heathen mind with the honour paid to the Redeemer by Christians. Of the worship offered in the Catacombs, of the stern yet tender discipline whereby the early Church stimulated, guided, moulded the heavenward aspirations of her children, paganism knew, could know, nothing. But the bearing and the exclamations of heroic servants of Christ, when arraigned before the tribunals of the empire, or when exposed to a death of torture and shame in the amphitheatres, were matters of public notoriety. The dying prayers of St. Stephen expressed the instinct, if they did not provoke the imitation, of many a martyr of later days.

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Thus it was that the martyrs prayed and died. Their voices reach us across the chasm of intervening centuries; but time cannot impair the moral majesty or weaken the accents of their strong and simple conviction. One after another, their piercing words, in which the sharpest human agony is so entwined with a superhuman faith, fall upon our ears:—

"O Christ, Thou Son of God, deliver Thy servants!"

"O Lord Jesu Christ, we are Christians; Thee do we serve; Thou art our Hope; Thou art the Hope of Christians; O God most holy, O God most high, O God Almighty!"

"O Christ!" cries a martyr again and again amidst his agonies, "O Christ, let me not be confounded!"

"Help, I pray Thee, O Christ; have pity! Preserve my soul, guard my spirit, that I be not ashamed. I pray Thee, O Christ, grant me power of endurance."

"I pray Thee, Christ, hear me. I thank Thee, my God; command that I be beheaded. I pray Thee, Christ, have mercy; help me, Thou Son of God."

"I pray Thee, O Christ: all praise to Thee. Deliver me, O Christ; I suffer in Thy Name. I suffer for a short while; I suffer with a willing mind, O Christ my Lord: let me not be confounded."

. . . . . .

You cannot, as I have already urged, dismiss from your consideration such prayers as these, on the ground of their being "mere ejaculations." Do serious men, who know they are dying, "ejaculate" at random? Is it at the hour of death that a man would naturally innovate upon the devotional habits of a lifetime? Is it at such an hour that he would make hitherto unattempted enterprises into the unseen world, and address himself to beings with whom he had not before deemed it lawful or possible to hold spiritual communion? Is not the reverse of this supposition notoriously the case? Surely those of us who have witnessed the last hours of the servants of Christ cannot hesitate as to the answer. As the soul draws nigh to the gate of death the solemnities of the eternal future are wont to cast their shadows upon the

thought and heart; and whatever is deepest, truest, most assured and precious thenceforth engrosses every power. At that dread yet blessed hour the soul clings with a new intensity and deliberation to the most certain truths, to the most prized and familiar words. The mental creations of an intellectual over-subtlety, or of a thoughtless enthusiasm, or of an unbridled imagination, or of a hidden perversity of will, or of an unsuspected unreality of character, fade away, or are discarded. To gaze upon the naked truth is the one necessity; to plant the feet upon the Rock itself the supreme desire, in that awful, searching, sifting moment. Often, too, at a man's last hour, will habit strangely assert its mysterious power of recovering, as if from the grave, thoughts and memories which seemed to have been lost for ever. Truths which have been half forgotten or quite forgotten since childhood, and prayers which were learned at a mother's knee, return upon the soul with resistless persuasiveness and force, while the accumulations of later years disappear and are lost sight of. Depend upon it, the martyrs prayed to Jesus in their agony because they had prayed to Him long before, many of them from infancy; because they knew from experience that such prayers were blessed and answered. They had been taught to pray to Him; they had joined in prayers to Him; they had persevered in praying to Him; and when at last their hour of trial and of glory came they had recourse to the prayers which they knew full well to be the secret of their strength, and those prayers carried them on through their agony to the crown beyond it.

St. John's Day.

Peter, seeing him, saith to Jesus, Lord, and what shall this man do? Jesus saith unto him, If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee? follow thou Me.—*St. John* xxi. 21, 22.

"Lord, and what shall this man do?"
Ask'st thou, Christian, for thy friend?
If his love for Christ be true,
Christ hath told thee of his end:
This is he whom God approves,
This is he whom Jesus loves.

Ask not of him more than this,
Leave it in his Saviour's breast,
Whether, early called to bliss,
He in youth shall find his rest,
Or armèd in his station wait
Till his Lord be at the gate:

Whether in his lonely course
(Lonely, not forlorn) he stay,
Or with Love's supporting force
Cheat the toil and cheer the way:
Leave it all in His high hand,
Who doth hearts as streams command.[1]

Gales from Heaven, if so He will,
Sweeter melodies can wake
On the lonely mountain rill
Than the meeting waters make.
Who hath the Father and the Son,
May be left, but not alone.

[1] The king's heart is in the hand of the Lord, as the rivers of water: He turneth it whithersoever He will.—*Prov.* xxi. 1.

Sick or healthful, slave or free,
Wealthy, or despised and poor—
What is that to him or thee,
So his love to Christ endure?
When the shore is won at last,
Who will count the billows past?

Only, since our souls will shrink
At the touch of natural grief,
When our earthly loved ones sink,
Lend us, Lord, Thy sure relief;
Patient hearts, their pain to see,
And Thy grace, to follow Thee.

The Collect.

MERCIFUL LORD, we beseech thee to cast thy bright beams of light upon thy Church, that it being enlightened by the doctrine of thy blessed Apostle and Evangelist Saint John, may so walk in the light of thy truth, that it may at length attain to the light of everlasting life; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

THE BELOVED DISCIPLE.

The unbelief of our day is naturally anxious to evade the startling fact that the most intimate of the companions of Jesus is also the most strenuous assertor of His Godhead. There is a proverb to the effect that no man's life should be written by his private servant. That proverb expresses the general conviction of mankind that, as a rule, like some mountain scenery or ruined castles, moral greatness in men is more picturesque when it is viewed from a distance. The proverb bids you not to scrutinise even a good man too narrowly, lest perchance you should discover flaws in his character which will somewhat rudely

shake your conviction of his goodness. It is hinted that some unobtrusive weaknesses which escape public observation will be obvious to a man's everyday companion, and will be fatal to the higher estimate which, but for such close scrutiny, might have been formed respecting him. But in the case of Jesus Christ the moral of this cynical proverb is altogether at fault. Jesus Christ chooses one disciple to be the privileged sharer of a nearer intimacy than any other. The son of Zebedee lies upon His bosom at supper! he is "the disciple whom Jesus loved." Along with St. Peter and St. James this disciple is taken to the holy mount, that he may witness the glory of his Transfigured Lord. He enters the empty tomb on the morning of the Resurrection. He is in the upper chamber when the risen Jesus blessed the ten and the eleven. He is on the mount of the Ascension when the Conqueror moves up visibly into heaven. But he also is summoned to the garden where Jesus kneels in agony beneath the olive trees; and alone of the twelve he faces the fierce multitude on the road to Calvary, and stands with Mary beneath the cross, and sees Jesus die. He sees more of the Divine Master than any other, more of His glory, more too of His humiliation. His witness is proportioned to his nearer and closer observation. Whether he is writing epistles of encouragement and warning, or narrating heavenly visions touching the future of the Church, or recording the experiences of those years when he enjoyed that intimate, unmatched companionship,—St. John, beyond any other of the sacred writers, is the persistent herald and teacher of our Lord's divinity.

How and by what successive steps it was that the full truth embodied in his Gospel respecting the Person of his Lord made its way into and mastered the soul of the

beloved disciple, who indeed shall presume to say? Who of us can determine the exact and varied observations whereby we learn to measure and to revere the component elements even of a great human character? The absorbing interest of such a process is generally fatal to an accurate analysis of its stages. We penetrate deeper and deeper, we mount higher and higher, as we follow the complex system of motives, capacities, dispositions, which, one after another, open upon us. We cannot, on looking back, say when this or that feature became distinctly clear to us. We know not now by what additions and developments the general impression which we have received took its shape and outline. St. John would doubtless have learnt portions of the mighty truth from definite statements and at specified times.

MEASURING OURSELVES.

Reflect upon the importance to every thinking agent of forming an accurate estimate of his powers, of taking a true measure of himself. It is fatal enough, we all of us know, and it is not uncommon, to think that we are of more importance, cleverer, wiser, better than we are. This is a mistake as to the nature of which the Gospel and the social common sense of man are entirely agreed. But it is only less fatal not to recognise the powers and opportunities which God has really given us, and to bury in a napkin some talent which is part of the endowment of our being. In this, as in all other matters, simple truthfulness is of the first importance. And life is worthily lived when a man has ascertained what his stock of capacities really are, and has resolved, God helping him, to make the best of them.

Thus, then, it is plain that the question whether we

exist or not after death challenges attention on utilitarian grounds. It enters directly into any serious estimate of what is meant by human life, and to form such an estimate cannot be other than a matter of the first practical importance to all of us. For a man as a moral being is a workman, working at himself; and a workman must know what he has to handle if he is to do his work well. What is this creature for the improvement of which we are each of us responsible? You and I find ourselves at this moment endowed with the blessed but awful prerogative of life. There was no necessity for our existing, and yet here we are. We may indeed pass days, weeks, months, years, without reflecting on what it is to live. But there are times, I believe, in almost every life, when thought is turned back upon itself, by some shock or sorrow, and when a man stands consciously face to face with the dread mystery of his own existence. What is it that we mean by that which each of us terms so lightly "I;" that inner being which thinks and feels and acts; which knows that it thinks and feels and acts; which determines its thought and its feeling and its action? What is this essence, the seat of reflection and memory and will, which although far removed from the touch of sense, is yet everywhere present behind the senses; which looks out from itself upon the beings and things around it, and knows itself to be utterly distinct from each and all of them? This inner essence is a fact; it is at least as recognisable a fact as some lump of matter which lies passive and helpless as you handle it. It is not less a fact, because it is endowed with the prerogative of being conscious that it is what it is; and we ask what it is worth, both in itself and as compared with things and beings around it? how long will it last? why is it

here? whither is it going? what is its origin? what its destiny?

. . . . . .

If when a man tries to take stock of his existence, he says to himself, "I am a higher sort of animal, who will certainly have ceased to exist altogether in the course of some twenty or thirty years," then he will probably do the best that can be done with life from a purely animal point of view. The outlook is closely bounded by a lofty fence, on which is traced the word "Annihilation;" and there is much in nature which whispers the old advice—

> "Dona præsentis rape lætus horæ,
> Linque severa"—

or which bids him, in more modern phrase, enjoy to the full the successive sensations, one by one, of his fleeting period of animation.

But suppose, on the other hand, that a man's thoughts run thus: "I am here, clothed in a frame of flesh and blood which must soon be subjected to decay and dissolution. But this stage of my existence is only a brief preface to another which will follow it, and of which there will be no end." To think thus, most assuredly, is to form another estimate of the best use to make of the remaining years of life. That vast illimitable existence beyond the grave already casts across a man's path some shadows, at the least, of its own magnificence; and it is felt that there is solemn work to be done, within and without him, while the day of preparation lasts.

The Holy Innocents.

These were redeemed from among men, being the first-fruits unto God and to the Lamb.—*Rev.* xiv. 4.

Say, ye celestial guards, who wait
In Bethlehem, round the Saviour's palace-gate,
Say, who are these on golden wings,
That hover o'er the new-born King of kings,
Their palms and garlands telling plain
That they are of the glorious martyr-train,
Next to yourselves ordained to praise
His Name, and brighten as on Him they gaze?

But where their spoils and trophies? where
The glorious dint a martyr's shield should bear?
How chance no cheek among them wears
The deep-worn trace of penitential tears,
But all is bright and smiling love.
As if, fresh-born from Eden's happy grove,
They had flown here, their King to see,
Nor ever had been heirs of dark mortality?

Ask, and some angel will reply,
"These, like yourselves, were born to sin and die,
But ere the poison root was grown,
God set His seal, and marked them for His own.
Baptized in blood for Jesus' sake,
Now underneath the Cross their bed they make,
Not to be scared from that sure rest
By frightened mother's shriek, or warrior's waving crest."

Mindful of these, the first-fruits sweet
Borne by the suffering Church her Lord to greet;

U. OF ILL. LIB.

Blessed Jesus ever loved to trace
The " innocent brightness " of an infant's face.
He raised them in His holy arms,
He blessed them from the world and all its harms:
Heirs though they were of sin and shame,
He blessed them in His own and in His Father's Name.

Then, as each fond, unconscious child
On th' Everlasting Parent sweetly smiled,
(Like infants sporting on the shore,
That tremble not at Ocean's boundless roar),
Were they not present to Thy thought,
All souls, that in their cradles Thou hast bought?
But chiefly these, who died for Thee,
That Thou might'st live for them a sadder death to see.

And next to these, Thy gracious word
Was as a pledge of benediction, stored
For Christian mothers, while they moan
Their treasured hopes, just born, baptized, and gone.
Oh, joy for Rachel's broken heart!
She and her babes shall meet no more to part;
So dear to Christ her pious haste
To trust them in His arms, for ever safe embraced.

She dares not grudge to leave them there,
Where to behold them was her heart's first prayer;
She dares not grieve—but she must weep,
As her pale placid martyr sinks to sleep,
Teaching so well and silently
How, at the shepherd's call, the lamb should die:
How happier far than life the end
Of souls that infant-like beneath their burthen bend.

The Collect.

O Almighty God, who out of the mouths of babes and sucklings hast ordained strength, and madest infants to glorify thee by their deaths; Mortify and kill all vices in us, and so strengthen us by thy grace, that by the innocency of our lives, and constancy of our faith even unto death, we may glorify thy holy Name; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

WITNESSES UNTO "ME."

Brethren, it is a most solemn question—is there anything in our life, in our language, anything we do, anything we endure, that really bears witness before the eyes of our fellow-men to the life and work of our ascended Saviour? Or are we living, speaking, feeling, acting, thinking much as we might have thought, acted, felt, spoken, and lived if we had been born of pagan parents, and had never heard of Bethlehem or Calvary? Or are we bearing Him what our consciences tell us is a partial witness, a witness of language but not of conduct—a witness which attests those features of His works or His doctrine which we prefer rather than what we know or might know about Him, and the heritage of grace and truth which He has brought from heaven? For if we believe in our very hearts that Jesus is God, we must see how from this glorious and lofty faith there results a derived faith in all the words and works of Jesus. Just as when we stand upon a central mountain-height we command a panoramic view, and as we overlook all lesser elevations we understand how all the diverging valleys at our feet are fertilised by the streamlet which flows from the rock which we have climbed, and which towers so stupendously above them. If we have the happiness to believe the fact that Jesus is divine, it cannot be a diffi-

culty to us that His death should be a world-redeeming sacrifice; that His sacraments should be channels of His quickening life. And as we witness for His person we must witness according to our measure to all that He has wrought, decided, or authorised, because He in whose truth and wisdom we place absolute reliance has authorised and decided it. Rising from the observation of His character to a belief in His Godhead, descending from a belief in His Godhead to a perfect acceptance of all that He teaches, we meet the clear, the unequivocal, the inalienable duty of witnessing to Him, His person, His work, His words, as the distinctive law of the Christian life. For witness is the debt which all Christians, without exception, owe to Jesus Christ our Lord. No class, or sex, or disposition, or age, can claim exemption. We cannot delegate our witness to Jesus to our clergy; it is not merely that we are bound to witness to Him; if we are living really Christian lives we cannot help doing so.

HUMILITY AND THE PRAYERS OF CHILDHOOD.

Without humility religious progress is impossible. Pride is the destruction of the principle of progress. It whispers to us continually that we are already all that could be desired, or it points our attention to high positions and ambitious efforts beyond the scope of other men. Now the true growth of the soul is not to be measured by our attempting many or extraordinary duties, but by our power of doing simple duties well; and humility, when it reigns in the soul, carries this principle into practice. It guides our religious thoughts to a deeper mastery of the central truths of faith, rather than to the study of those intricate problems which lie on the outskirts of theology. It counsels us, when on our knees,

to use simple prayers. We do well to retain the very prayers which we used as children, however we may add to them, and to throw our whole soul into each separate clause and word. It enriches common acts of neighbourly and social kindness with that intensity of moral effort which is due to every act, the deepest moving power of which is the love of God.

First Sunday after Christmas.

So the sun returned ten degrees, by which degrees it was gone down. —*Isaiah* xxxviii. 8; compare *Joshua* x. 13.

'Tis true, of old th' unchanging sun
His daily course refused to run;
The pale moon hurrying to the west
Paused at a mortal's call, to aid
Th' avenging storm of war, that laid
Seven guilty realms at once on earth's defilèd breast.

But can it be, one suppliant tear
Should stay the ever-moving sphere?
A sick man's lowly-breathèd sigh,
When from the world he turns away,[1]
And hides his weary eyes to pray,
Should change your mystic dance, ye wanderers of the sky?

We, too, O Lord, would fain command,
As then, Thy wonder-working hand,
And backward force the waves of Time
That now so swift and silent bear
Our restless bark from year to year;
Help us to pause and mourn to Thee our tale of crime.

[1] Then Hezekiah turned his face toward the wall, and prayed unto the Lord.—*Isaiah* xxxviii. 2.

Bright hopes, that erst the bosom warmed,
And vows, too pure to be performed,
And prayers blown wide by gales of care;
These, and such faint half-waking dreams,
Like stormy lights on mountain streams,
Wavering and broken all, athwart the conscience glare.

How shall we escape th' o'erwhelming Past?
Can spirits broken, joys o'ercast,
And eyes that nevermore may smile:—
Can these th' avenging bolt delay,
Or win us back one little day
The bitterness of death to soften and beguile?

Father and Lover of our souls!
Though darkly round Thine anger rolls,
Thy sunshine smiles beneath the gloom,
Thou seekest to warn us, not confound,
Thy showers would pierce the hardened ground,
And win it to give out its brightness and perfume.

Thou smilest on us in wrath, and we,
E'en in remorse, would smile on Thee;
The tears that bathe our offered hearts,
We would not have them stained and dim,
But dropped from wings of seraphim,
All glowing with the light accepted Love imparts.

Time's waters will not ebb, nor stay,
Power cannot change them, but Love may;
What cannot be, Love counts it done.
Deep in the heart, her searching view
Can read where Faith is fixed and true,
Through shades of setting life can see Heaven's work begun.

O Thou, who keep'st the Key of love,
Open Thy fount, eternal Dove,
And overflow this heart of mine,
Enlarging as it fills with Thee,
Till in one blaze of charity
Care and remorse are lost, like motes in light divine;

Till, as each moment wafts us higher,
By every gush of pure desire,
And high-breathed hope of joys above,
By every secret sigh we heave,
Whole years of folly we outlive,
In His unerring sight, who measures Life by Love.

The Collect.

ALMIGHTY GOD, who hast given us thy only-begotten Son to take our nature upon him, and as at this time to be born of a pure Virgin; Grant that we being regenerate, and made thy children by adoption and grace, may daily be renewed by thy Holy Spirit; through the same our Lord Jesus Christ, who liveth and reigneth with thee and the same Spirit, ever one God, world without end. *Amen.*

THE SOUL'S PAST.

Every Christian soul has its past, its sacred memories known only to itself and to God. Like St. Paul, perhaps, it has at one time or another heard unspeakable things which it is not lawful for a man to utter. It has been close to God—possessed of His secrets,—instinct with His life. It has had its own invisible friends, its own hopes and fears, its own horizons on earth and in heaven. These things, my brethren, are not transferable. But, besides these, it has had that devotion to our divine Redeemer, Jesus, God and man, who gave His life for

each and for all of us—that sense of the present energy of His Spirit—that value and reverence for His means of grace which are characteristic of a Christian. And, above all, the moral results of the Christian life—love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance—these, too, it has fostered in its garden, for the Holy Spirit has been there, and it is He who gives the increase of such flowers and fruits as these. But, like nations and churches, souls, too, have their periods of depression—their epochs of growth and decline. There is no such thing as indefectible grace. We may forfeit God's grace, partly or wholly; and it is a mistake to think that we, all of us, necessarily, as we get older, grow better. Many of us really do get worse. Times of darkness, of deadness, of spiritual blindness, come even to tried and faithful servants of Christ. They no longer believe, hope, love, as they did once. They no longer pray as they prayed once. Conscience is left to take care of itself in a way which would have been impossible years ago. God, the Holy Trinity, in His awful and blessed life,—Jesus, our Lord, God and man,—the loving and inspiring Spirit,—the written Word of God,—the home of souls, the Church—the sacraments, the means of grace, the hope of heaven, the fear of hell—these things are no longer what they used to be to the soul. A deadness, it is plain—a deadness has come over it. Phrases have taken the place of convictions. The eternal realities have been somehow displaced in its affections by the things of time. That soul is in a fair way to die outright. It is carried out to be buried by the spirit of the world—by the force of circumstances; and then some danger, some illness, some heart-ache which convulses the depths of being, leads it to seek retreat. The Moabites are in sight, and it is thrust into the tomb of Elisha: it is

brought into contact with its own buried past,—with the years of old which have been as forgotten as if they had never been,—with the thoughts that had once been uppermost—with the friends who have long since passed into another world. All that early time which seemed to have perished so utterly is there buried away in the tomb of memory; and the discovery of an old letter, or a visit to an early home, or a conversation with a friend who has not been heard of for years, may awaken it, as by a touch of the bones of Elisha.

> "Thou unrelenting past!
> Strong are the barriers round thy dark domain;
> And fetters sure and fast
> Hold all that enter thy unbreathing reign.
>
> Thou hast my better years;
> Thou hast my earlier friends; the good, the kind,
> Yielded to thee with tears—
> The venerable form, the exalted mind.
>
> Thine for a space are they;
> Yet shalt thou yield thy treasures up at last;
> Thy gates shall yet give way,
> Thy bolts shall fail, inexorable past!"

Oh, wonderful awakening, in which what seemed to have perished is again before us—in which we again become, in some measure, what we were—in which the dead speak to us as if they were yet living—in which the ideas, the resolutions, the hopes, the habits, of thirty years before, resume their sway as with a life from the dead! The memory of the days of old and of the years that are past may be—often is—nothing less than the very crisis of destiny—a true spiritual rising from the dead.

The Circumcision of Christ.

In whom also ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands.—*Coloss.* ii. 11.

THE year begins with Thee,
And Thou beginn'st with woe,
To let the world of sinners see
That blood for sin must flow.

Thine infant cries, O Lord,
Thy tears upon the breast,
Are not enough—the legal sword
Must do its stern behest.

Like sacrificial wine
Poured on a victim's head
Are those few precious drops of Thine,
Now first to offering led.

They are the pledge and seal
Of Christ's unswerving faith
Given to His Sire, our souls to heal,
Although it cost His death.

They to His Church of old,
To each true Jewish heart,
In Gospel graces manifold
Communion blest impart.

Now of Thy love we deem
As of an ocean vast,
Mounting in tides against the stream
Of ages gone and past.

Both theirs and ours Thou art,
As we and they are Thine;
Kings, Prophets, Patriarchs—all have part
Along the sacred line.

By blood and water too
God's mark is set on Thee,
That in Thee every faithful view
Both covenants might see.

O bond of union, dear
And strong as is Thy grace!
Saints, parted by a thousand year,
May thus in heart embrace.

Is there a mourner true,
Who, fallen on faithless days,
Sighs for the heart-consoling view
Of those Heaven deigned to praise?

In spirit mayst thou meet
With faithful Abraham here,
Whom soon in Eden thou shalt greet
A nursing Father dear.

Wouldst thou a poet be?
And would thy dull heart fain
Borrow of Israel's minstrelsy
One high enraptured strain?

Come here thy soul to tune,
Here set thy feeble chant;
Here, if at all beneath the moon,
Is holy David's haunt.

Art thou a child of tears,
Cradled in care and woe?
And seems it hard, thy vernal years
Few vernal joys can show?

And fall the sounds of mirth
Sad on thy lonely heart,
From all the hopes and charms of earth
Untimely called to part?

Look here, and hold thy peace;
The Giver of all good
E'en from the womb takes no release
From suffering, tears, and blood.

If thou wouldst reap in love,
First sow in holy fear:
So life a winter's morn may prove
To a bright endless year.

The Collect.

ALMIGHTY GOD, who madest thy blessed Son to be circumcised, and obedient to the law for man; Grant us the true Circumcision of the Spirit; that our hearts, and all our members, being mortified from all worldly and carnal lusts, we may in all things obey thy blessed will; through the same thy Son Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

THE WITNESSES OF SELF-SACRIFICE.

The power, the beauty of the Christian life does not depend upon the accidents which part men from one another in this world. It has nothing to do with station, or education, or with blood. In Jesus Christ neither the

presence nor absence of these things availeth anything, but only the new creation. There is a ray of gentle light which plays almost visibly upon the soul, which enjoys real communion with Jesus; there is a beauty of spirit and of temper which tells its own tale, which is the most eloquent of missionaries. The soul that believes and prays cannot close up the doors of feeling and of thought, cannot prevent the escape of that heavenly virtue, of those powers of the eternal world, which have renewed its own inmost life. Be Christians, my brethren, indeed, and you *will* witness to Jesus. You who are at the summits of society and you who are at its base, you who teach and you who learn, you who command and you who obey, masters and servants, old and young, unlettered and scholars, each of you may bear his witness to our Almighty Saviour. And in a lower and weaker and feebler sense, they who exhibit only the natural virtues will do this, and thus courage under difficulties, and temperance amidst self-indulgent livers, and justice and equity truly observed between man and man are forms of this witness. They who are in power, and who, renouncing selfish projects, aim simply at the good of others; they who have wealth and who spend it, not on foolish baubles, but in relieving that mass of spiritual and bodily suffering which lives day by day in such close and ghastly contrast with the selfish luxury that would even ignore its very existence,—these too bear their witness. The friendless young man in London who, amid temptations, dares to live a really pure life, is a witness for Jesus Christ. The maid-of-all-work who serves a hard master faithfully and affectionately, she witnesses to Jesus Christ. The delicately bred lady who renounces the attractions of society to nurse the fever-stricken patients in the ward of an hospital, or to teach a fallen sister from whom her own pure nature

instinctively shrinks, that it is possible to be pure again —she, too, with her eye upon Calvary, witnesses to Jesus. All who sacrifice self to others, all who sacrifice self to truth for the sake of the good Lord who bought them, witness to Him.

Second Sunday after Christmas.

When the poor and needy seek water, and there is none, and their tongue faileth for thirst, I the Lord will hear them, I the God of Israel will not forsake them.—*Isaiah* xli. 17.

And wilt Thou hear the fevered heart
To Thee in silence cry?
And as th' inconstant wildfires dart
Out of the restless eye,
Wilt Thou forgive the wayward thought,
By kindly woes yet half untaught
A Saviour's right, so dearly bought,
That Hope should never die?

Thou wilt: for many a languid prayer
Has reached Thee from the wild,
Since the lorn mother, wandering there,
Cast down her fainting child,[1]
Then stole apart to weep and die,
Nor knew an angel form was nigh,
To show soft waters gushing by
And dewy shadows mild.

Thou wilt—for Thou art Israel's God,
And Thine unwearied arm
Is ready yet with Moses' rod,
The hidden rill to charm

[1] Hagar. See Genesis xxi. 15.

Out of the dry unfathom'd deep
Of sands, that lie in lifeless sleep,
Save when the scorching whirlwinds heap
Their waves in rude alarm.

These moments of wild wrath are Thine—
Thine too the drearier hour
When o'er the horizon's silent line
Fond hopeless fancies cower,
And on the traveller's listless way
Rises and sets th' unchanging day,
No cloud in heaven to slake its ray,
On earth no sheltering bower.

Thou wilt be there, and not forsake,
To turn the bitter pool
Into a bright and breezy lake,
The throbbing brow to cool:
Till left awhile with Thee alone
The wilful heart be fain to own
That He, by whom our bright hours shone,
Our darkness best may rule.

The scent of water far away
Upon the breeze is flung:
The desert pelican to-day
Securely leaves her young,
Reproving thankless man, who fears
To journey on a few lone years,
Where on the sand Thy step appears,
Thy crown in sight is hung.

Thou, who didst sit on Jacob's well
The weary hour of noon,[1]
The languid pulses Thou canst tell,
The nerveless spirit tune.

[1] St. John iv 6.

Thou from whose Cross in anguish burst
The cry that owned Thy dying thirst,[1]
To Thee we turn, our Last and First,
Our Sun and soothing Moon.

From darkness, here, and dreariness
We ask not full repose,
Only be Thou at hand, to bless
Our trial hour of woes.
Is not the pilgrim's toil o'erpaid
By the clear rill and palmy shade?
And see we not, up Earth's dark glade,
The gate of Heaven unclose?

*** *The Collect is the same as for the previous day.*

PRAYER ANSWERED.

That prayer, sooner or later, is answered is, for all who have prayed earnestly and constantly, in different degrees, a matter of personal experience. David, Elijah, Hezekiah, Daniel, the apostles of Christ, were not the victims of an illusion, in virtue of which they connected certain events which would have happened in any case with prayers that preceded it. They who never pray, or who never pray with the humility, confidence, and importunity that win a way to the heart of God, cannot speak from experience as to the effects of prayer; nor are they in a position to give credit, with wise and generous simplicity, to those who can. But, at least, on such a subject as this, the voice of the whole company of God's servants may be held to counterbalance a few *à priori* surmises or doctrines. It is the heart of humility itself

[1] St. John xix. 28

which, from age to age, mounts up with the Psalmist to the Eternal Throne: "O Thou that hearest prayer, unto Thee shall all flesh come!" And Christians can penetrate within the veil. They know that there is a majestic pleading which for eighteen centuries has never ceased, and which is itself omnipotent—the pleading of One who makes their cause His own: they rest upon the Divine words, "Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in My name, He will give it you."

The Epiphany.

And, lo, the star, which they saw in the east, went before them, till it came and stood over where the young Child was. When they saw the star, they rejoiced with exceeding great joy.—*St. Matt.* ii. 9, 10.

STAR of the East, how sweet art Thou,
Seen in life's early morning sky,
Ere yet a cloud has dimmed the brow,
While yet we gaze with childish eye;

When father, mother, nursing friend,
Most dearly loved, and loving best,
First bid us from their arms ascend,
Pointing to Thee in Thy sure rest.

Too soon the glare of earthly day
Buries, to us, Thy brightness keen,
And we are left to find our way
By faith and hope in Thee unseen.

What matter? if the waymarks sure
On every side around us set,
Soon overleaped, but not obscure?
'Tis ours to mark them or forget.

What matter? if in calm old age
Our childhood's star again arise,
Crowning our lonely pilgrimage
With all that cheers a wanderer's eyes?

Ne'er may we lose it from our sight,
Till all our hopes and thoughts are led
To where it stays its lucid flight
Over our Saviour's lowly bed.

There, swathed in humblest poverty,
On Chastity's meek lap enshrined,
With breathless Reverence waiting by,
When we our sovereign Master find.

Will not the long-forgotten glow
Of mingled joy and awe return,
When stars above or flowers below
First made our infant spirits burn?

Look on us, Lord, and take our parts
E'en on Thy throne of purity!
From these our proud yet grovelling hearts
Hide not Thy mild forgiving eye.

Did not the Gentile Church find grace,
Our mother dear, this favoured day?
With gold and myrrh she sought Thy face,
Nor didst Thou turn Thy face away.

She too,[1] in earlier, purer days,
Had watched Thee gleaming faint and far—
But wandering in self-chosen ways
She lost Thee quite, Thou lovely star.

[1] The Patriarchal Church.

Yet had her Father's finger turned
To Thee her first inquiring glance:
The deeper shame within her burned,
When wakened from her wilful trance.

Behold, her wisest throng Thy gate,
Their richest, sweetest, purest store,
(Yet owned too worthless and too late,)
They lavish on Thy cottage-floor.

They give their best—O tenfold shame
On us their fallen progeny,
Who sacrifice the blind and lame[1]—
Who will not wake or fast with Thee!

The Collect.

O God, who by the leading of a star didst manifest thy only-begotten Son to the Gentiles; Mercifully grant, that we, which know thee now by faith, may after this life have the fruition of thy glorious Godhead; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

IS THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT A DEAD LETTER?

Certainly it is not uncommon in our day to be informed that "the Sermon on the Mount is a dead letter in Christendom." In consequence (so men speak) of the engrossing interest which Christians have wrongly attached to the discussion of dogmatic questions, that original draught of essential Christianity, the Sermon on the Mount, has been well-nigh altogether lost sight of. Perhaps you ere now have repeated some of the current commonplaces on this topic. But have you endeavoured to ascertain whether

[1] Malachi i. 8.

it is indeed as you say? You remark that you at least have not met with Christians who seemed to be making any sincere efforts to turn the Sermon on the Mount into practice. It may be so. But the question is, Where have you looked for them? Do you expect to meet them rushing hurriedly along the great highways of life with the keen, eager, self-asserting multitude? Do you expect that with their eye upon the Beatitudes and upon the Cross, they will throng the roads which lead to worldly success, to earthly wealth, to temporal honour? Be assured that those who know where moral beauty, ay, the highest, is to be found, are not disappointed, even at this hour, in their search for it. Until you have looked more carefully, more anxiously than has probably been the case, for the triumph of our Lord's work in Christian souls, you may do well to take upon trust the testimony of others. You may at least be sufficiently generous, ay, and sufficiently reasonable, to believe in the existence at this present time of the very highest types of Christian virtue. . . . At this moment there are millions of souls in the world that are pure, humble, and loving. But for Jesus Christ our Lord these millions would have been proud, sensual, selfish.

First Sunday after Epiphany.

They shall spring up as among the grass, as willows by the water courses.—*Isaiah* xliv. 4.

LESSONS sweet of spring returning,
Welcome to the thoughtful heart!
May I call ye sense or learning,
Instinct pure, or Heaven-taught art?

Be your title what it may,
Sweet the lengthening April day,
While with you the soul is free,
Ranging wild o'er hill and lea.

Soft as Memnon's harp at morning,
To the inward ear devout,
Touched by light, with heavenly warning
Your transporting chords ring out.
Every leaf in every nook,
Every wave in every brook,
Chanting with a solemn voice,
Minds us of our better choice.

Needs no show of mountain hoary,
Winding shore or deepening glen,
Where the landscape in its glory
Teaches truth to wandering men:
Give true hearts but earth and sky,
And some flowers to bloom and die,—
Homely scenes and simple views
Lowly thoughts may best infuse.

See the soft green willow springing
Where the waters gently pass,
Every way her free arms flinging
O'er the moist and reedy grass.
Long ere winter blasts are fled,
See her tipped with vernal red,
And her kindly flower displayed
Ere her leaf can cast a shade.

Though the rudest hand assail her,
Patiently she droops awhile,
But when showers and breezes hail her,
Wears again her willing smile

Thus I learn Contentment's power
From the slighted willow bower,
Ready to give thanks, and live
On the least that Heaven may give.

If, the quiet brooklet leaving,
Up the stony vale I wind,
Haply half in fancy grieving
For the shades I leave behind,
By the dusty wayside drear,
Nightingales with joyous cheer
Sing, my sadness to reprove,
Gladlier than in cultured grove.

Where the thickest boughs are twining
Of the greenest darkest tree,
There they plunge, the light declining—
All may hear, but none may see.
Fearless of the passing hoof,
Hardly will they fleet aloof;
So they live in modest ways,
Trust entire, and ceaseless praise.

The Collect.

O Lord, we beseech thee mercifully to receive the prayers of thy people which call upon thee; and grant that they may both perceive and know what things they ought to do, and also may have grace and power faithfully to fulfil the same; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

THE CHRISTIAN'S JOY.

The power of rejoicing in our Lord is one of the great motive forces of the Christian life; within the regenerate soul it is, in our Lord's words, a "well of water springing

up to the everlasting life." It fertilises everything—thought, feeling, resolution, worship; it gives a new spring and impulse to what before was passive and well-nigh dead; it makes outward efforts and inward graces possible which else had been undreamt of. Thus St. Paul, speaking of the Macedonian Christians, says that the abundance of their joy and their deep poverty abounded unto the riches of their liberality; thus he prays God to fill the Roman Christians with "all joy and peace in believing." Why? That they may abound in hope. In fact, joy is enthusiasm, and enthusiasm is a great motive and productive force which carries men right out of themselves and makes them to do and suffer much which else would be impossible. And thus in the end this joy in the Lord diffuses itself over the Christian's whole life. The man's look, his manner, his work, his worship, should if possible all be cheerful. A Christian in a state of grace has a right, as no other man living has a right, to be in high spirits. Nowhere does the New Testament imply that there is a special sort of spirituality in moroseness and gloom, least of all in those actions which more than any other express our relation to and our feelings about the source of our joy, the eternal God. The brighter worship, public worship, can be in the soul of the worshippers, and in all its outward accompaniments, the more distinctively Christian it is. What else do we mean by saying, as we do deliberately over and over again, "My mouth shall praise Thee with joyful lips;" "Make a joyful noise to the God of Jacob;" "O come, let us sing unto the Lord, let us heartily rejoice in the strength of our salvation;" "Let the children of Zion be joyful in their King; let the saints be joyful with glory; let them rejoice in their beds;" "I will go to the altar of God, even to the God of my joy and gladness, and

upon the harp will I give thanks unto thee, O God, my God"? The Psalms are full of this language. What does it all mean but that the worship, outward and inward, the worship and the life of those who dare to use it should be uniformly joyous? Pray, then, pray for this great peace; pray that through God's pardoning mercy in Christ you may have a right to your Christmas joy. Joy is the gift of the Holy Spirit; ask Him for it. The works of the Spirit, says the apostle, are first love, then joy. "Righteousness, peace, joy in the Holy Ghost," this is the inspired description of the kingdom of God within the soul of man. This gift will not be refused you if you ask for it, and you will experience not an occasional convulsion, spasmodic, unseemly, boisterous, it may be irreverent, but a tranquil yet strong emotion, which, like a river bearing the soul upon its surface, sparkles brightly as the beams of the Sun of righteousness fall upon it, and as slowly but surely it pursues its way towards the ocean of eternity; for there is the end, there at last in His presence is "the fulness of joy, and at His right hand are the pleasures for evermore."

Second Sunday after Epiphany.

Every man at the beginning doth set forth good wine; and when men have well drunk, then that which is worse: but thou hast kept the good wine until now.—*St. John* ii. 10.

THE heart of childhood is all mirth:
We frolic to and fro
As free and blithe, as if on earth
Were no such thing as woe.

But if indeed with reckless faith
We trust the flattering voice,
Which whispers, "Take thy fill ere death,
Indulge thee and rejoice;"

Too surely, every setting day,
Some lost delight we mourn,
The flowers all die along our way,
Till we, too, die forlorn.

Such is the world's gay garish feast,
In her first charming bowl
Infusing all that fires the breast,
And cheats th' unstable soul.

And still, as loud the revel swells,
The fevered pulse beats higher,
Till the seared taste from foulest wells
Is fain to slake its fire:

Unlike the feast of heavenly love
Spread at the Saviour's word
For souls that hear His call, and prove
Meet for His bridal board.

Why should we fear, youth's draught of joy,
If pure, would sparkle less?
Why should the cup the sooner cloy,
Which God hath deigned to bless?

For is it Hope, that thrills so keen
Along each bounding vein,
Still whispering glorious things unseen?—
Faith makes the vision plain.

The world would kill her soon: but Faith
Her daring dreams will cherish,
Speeding her gaze o'er time and death
To realms where nought can perish.

Or is it Love, the dear delight
Of hearts that know no guile,
That all around see all things bright
With their own magic smile?

The silent joy, that sinks so deep,
Of confidence and rest,
Lulled in a father's arms to sleep,
Clasped to a mother's breast?

Who, but a Christian, through all life
That blessing may prolong?
Who, through the world's sad day of strife,
Still chant his morning song?

Fathers may hate us or forsake,
God's foundlings then are we;
Mother on child no pity take,[1]
But we shall still have Thee.

We may look home, and seek in vain
A fond fraternal heart,
But Christ hath given His promise plain
To do a Brother's part.

Nor shall dull age, as worldlings say,
The heavenward flame annoy:
The Saviour cannot pass away,
And with Him lives our joy.

[1] Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? yea, they may forget, yet will I not forget thee.—*Isaiah* xlix. 15.

Ever the richest tenderest glow
Sets round th' autumnal sun—
But there sight fails: no heart may know
The bliss when life is done.

Such is Thy banquet, dearest Lord;
O give us grace, to cast
Our lot with Thine, to trust Thy word,
And keep our best till last.

The Collect.

ALMIGHTY and everlasting God, who dost govern all things in heaven and earth; Mercifully hear the supplications of thy people, and grant us thy peace all the days of our life; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

THE LIFE OF FAITH.

Here, then, let me join issue by asking, What is meant by faith in a person? You reply that faith in a person is an instinct rather than a judgment; that it is an act of the heart rather than of the intellect, or at most a combined act of heart and understanding moving together. Very well: you do not then mean to say that faith in a person is altogether irrational; you mean that it depends upon reasons which can be produced, if need be, but which the heart would rather keep in the background, if only from the natural disinclination to discuss that which we love. This, indeed, is the case with our trust in the relatives and friends of early life. Few men have drawn out into a formal theory their deepest grounds of confidence in a father or in an elder brother, or in a very wise and revered adviser; to do this would be like exposing to the rays of the sun the roots of a very tender

plant. Still the time may come when you will have to do this at all costs. If, for instance, you are told that the object of your trust is not what he appears to be; that he is insincere or selfish, or otherwise unworthy of the confidence which you place in him, from that moment forth you are obliged to consider *why* it is that you trust him, and whether it is reasonable to continue to do so. You have no choice about it. From that moment forth, if your trust survives the early shock of hostile controversy, it necessarily assumes the form of deliberate assent to a proposition or to a series of propositions; it becomes, whether you will or not, something like a formal creed. It takes the shape of assent to the propositions that your friend *is* sincere; that he is unselfish; that he is all which it was suggested he was not; that he is, in short, worthy of the confidence you have placed in him; and this personal or domestic creed of your heart has its warnings, yes, if it must be so, its damnatory clauses behind; it affirms that to deny your friend's sincerity or unselfishness is to forfeit all the happiness that this precious trust in his character implies. Some who are here may possibly have known the agony of moments when faith in an old friend has been assailed by some insinuation or controversy; and when the instincts of love and loyalty have had to throw themselves into a harsh logical form, if the heart was not to be left in the outer darkness of a lifelong disappointment.

Thus, if we may compare small things with great, it has fared with the faith of Christendom in Him who is the adored Master of every truly Christian soul. At first faith in Him was an instinctive trust; it was the trust of the weak, the sickly, the poor, the wandering, the bewildered, in One towards whom they were drawn as if fascinated by some power which they did not analyse, yet

could not but obey. So it doubtless was with the men and women who sought His blessed feet and hung upon His words in the villages and lanes of Galilee. He was surrounded from the first by the deep fervid homage of human hearts. But even within the apostolic age the grounds of this homage were challenged. Was He indeed what He claimed to be; was He the Teacher, King, and Judge of men? Was He what His followers said of Him? Was He not in reality much less than this, if not, indeed, as the Jews alleged, something utterly different? These questions could not be declined; and an apostle insists upon the necessity of "giving a reason" for the hope with which Christians had been endowed by Christ. The Christian heart might still pour out its ceaseless tide of adoration and trust; but the Christian intellect must the while be able formally to proclaim why the Object of that homage was rightfully entitled to it. Faith in Jesus Christ had already passed from the region of pure moral instincts into the atmosphere of dialectics. The transition, however unwelcome, was from the nature of the case inevitable; but the logical form which was thus given to the tenderest spiritual judgments of the earliest Christendom did not really forfeit their inner character.

For it was asked whether Jesus Christ was really justified in using the language which He did use about Himself. Was He really able to fulfil the promises which He made so profusely, and which His Apostles made in His name, and with His authority? Who was He then, in His deepest personality, that He should speak sometimes as if He were Monarch of two worlds; sometimes as if His aims and interests were strictly identical with those of God; sometimes as if His human countenance and form was but a veil of a Being who did not really

belong to the sphere of sense and mortality and time? If men were to cling to His pierced hands, protesting that they could trust Him not merely in life but in death —not merely for time, but in eternity; what was the justifiable basis and explanation of this unique and altogether extraordinary trust? It was a vital question, which, having once been raised, could not be evaded, at least if Christianity was to live.

Third Sunday after Epiphany.

When Jesus heard it, He marvelled, and said to them that followed, Verily I say unto you, I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel.—*St. Matthew* viii. 10.

I MARKED a rainbow in the north,
What time the wild autumnal sun
From his dark veil at noon looked forth,
As glorying in his course half done,
Flinging soft radiance far and wide
Over the dusky heaven and bleak hill-side.

It was a gleam to Memory dear,
And as I walk and muse apart,
When all seems faithless round and drear,
I would revive it in my heart,
And watch how light can find its way
To regions farthest from the fount of day.

Light flashes in the gloomiest sky,
And music in the dullest plain,
For there the lark is soaring high
Over her flat and leafless reign,
And chanting in so blithe a tone,
It shames the weary heart to feel itself alone.

Brighter than rainbow in the north,
More cheery than the matin lark,
Is the soft gleam of Christian worth,
Which on some holy house we mark;
Dear to the Pastor's aching heart
To think, where'er he looks, such gleam may have a part;

May dwell, unseen by all but Heaven,
Like diamond blazing in the mine;
For ever, where such grace is given,
It fears in open day to shine,[1]
Lest the deep stain it owns within
Break out, and Faith be shamed by the believer's sin.

In silence and afar they wait,
To find a prayer their Lord may hear;
Voice of the poor and desolate,
You best may bring it to His ear;
Your grateful intercessions rise
With more than royal pomp, and pierce the skies.

Happy the soul, whose precious cause
You in the Sovereign Presence plead—
"This is the lover of Thy laws,[2]
The friend of Thine in fear and need"—
For to the poor Thy mercy lends
That solemn style, "Thy nation and Thy friends."

[1] Lord, I am not worthy that Thou shouldest enter under my roof.—*St. Luke* vii. 6.

"From the first time that the impressions of religion settled deeply in his mind, he used great caution to conceal it; not only in obedience to the rule given by our Saviour, of fasting, praying, and giving alms in secret, but from a particular distrust he had of himself; for he said he was afraid he should at some time or other do some enormous thing, which, if he were looked on as a very religious man, might cast a reproach on the profession of it, and give great advantages to impious men to blaspheme the name of God."—*Burnet's Life of Hale, in Wordsworth's Eccl. Biog.*, vi. 73.

[2] He loveth our nation.—*St. Luke* vii. 5.

He too is blest, whose outward eye
The graceful lines of art may trace,
While his free spirit, soaring high,
Discerns the glorious from the base;
Till out of dust his magic raise [1]
A home for prayer and love, and full harmonious praise.

Where far away and high above,
In maze on maze the trancèd sight
Strays, mindful of that heavenly love
Which knows no end in depth or height,
While the strong breath of Music seems
To waft us ever on, soaring in blissful dreams.

What though in poor and humble guise
Thou here didst sojourn, cottage-born?
Yet from Thy glory in the skies
Our earthly gold Thou dost not scorn.
For Love delights to bring her best,
And where Love is, that offering evermore is blest.

Love on the Saviour's dying head
Her spikenard drops unblamed may pour,
May mount His cross, and wrap Him dead
In spices from the golden shore: [2]
Risen, may embalm His sacred name
With all a Painter's art, and all a Minstrel's flame.

Worthless and lost our offerings seem,
Drops in the ocean of His praise;
But Mercy with her genial beam
Is ripening them to pearly blaze,
To sparkle in His crown above,
Who welcomes here a child's as there an angel's love.

[1] He hath built us a synagogue.—*St. Luke* vii. 5.
[2] St. John xii. 7; xix. 30.

The Collect.

ALMIGHTY and everlasting God, mercifully look upon our infirmities, and in all our dangers and necessities stretch forth thy right hand to help and defend us; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

THE TRUE IDEAL OF CHRISTIAN LIFE.

The Christian life is above all things a great venture: it is a stake on the eternal future. This is one of the deepest differences between the Christian life and the lives of men who are not governed by Christian principle. The ordinary man of the world says everything after death is at the most an uncertainty, and, therefore, he makes the most he can out of the hours as they pass by; and he, after a fashion, has his reward. The Christian, on the contrary, says: "I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that He is able to keep that which I have committed unto Him against that day." His reward is to be the product of his investment in the future. He dreads nothing so much as the risk of drawing it before the time. He sees a true and deep meaning in the words of Jesus Christ, "Woe unto you when all men speak well of you;" and again, "Blessed are ye when men shall revile you, and speak all manner of evil against you falsely, for My name's sake; for great is your reward in heaven." It does not, indeed, follow that, because a man is abused or unsuccessful in this life, therefore he will be glorified in the next; but, at any rate, there is a safety in being unpopular, in being unrecognised, in being thought little of and denied, which those who stake all on the future gratefully recognise; and there is a danger in the kind words of friends, in the homage of society, in the patronage of the great.

Even in the public recognition of religious men there is a danger which ought to haunt the soul that is living for hereafter. Each man must ask himself, Is my reward being had now? Is there anything left to be given to me by and by by the hand of Christ? On the other hand it does not follow that all good works rewarded now forfeit a reward hereafter: for He who said, "They have their reward," said also, "Let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven."

. . . . . .

By way of practical resolve, let us always endeavour to think of our work, and of each occasion in life, as we shall think of them when we are dying. It is certain that at that solemn hour all that has been done merely to win the praise of man, and that has not been offered to the all-seeing God, will be accounted worthless. Many will say in that day, "Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Thy name, and in Thy name cast out devils?" And He will say unto them, "I know you not; depart from me." Yes, the outward splendour of a life will then count for little if it has not been lived with the simple desire to glorify God. The applause of mobs, or of literary circles, or clubs, or drawing-rooms, or senates will then be rated at its true value as the verdict of mere human judgment, contributed by human passion, and so unworthy of remembrance. One Being only, in all His sanctity, His justice, His majesty, will then be present to the eye of the soul, if it is in any sense alive; "the Lord alone will be exalted in that day." Think of that hour, then, so inevitable—it may be, so near—and resolve to live for a reward which then will not be utterly worthless. Resolve to set God always before you in

your work, in the business and in the relaxation of life as well as in your devotions. It may be hard—at first it will be hard—to live in consciousness that the eye of the unseen Master is upon you, with the object of offering to Him all you think, and say, and do; it may be hard, but it is worth the effort. Nothing is worth having which passes away before there is time to grasp it; nothing is lost by a disappointment which is the prelude to endless glory.

Fourth Sunday after Epiphany.

When they saw Him, they besought Him that He would depart out of their coasts.—*St. Matthew* viii. 34.

THEY know th' Almighty's power,
Who, wakened by the rushing midnight shower,
Watch for the fitful breeze
To howl and chafe amid the bending trees,
Watch for the still white gleam
To bathe the landscape in a fiery stream,
Touching the tremulous eye with sense of light
Too rapid and too pure for all but angel sight.

They know th' Almighty's love,
Who, when the whirlwinds rock the topmost grove,
Stand in the shade, and hear
The tumult with a deep exulting fear,
How, in their fiercest sway,
Curb'd by some power unseen, they die away,
Like a bold steed that owns his rider's arm,
Proud to be check'd and soothed by that o'ermastering charm.

But there are storms within
That heave the struggling heart with wilder din,
And there is power and love
The maniac's rushing frenzy to reprove;
And when he takes his seat,
Cloth'd and in calmness, at his Saviour's feet,[1]
Is not the power as strange, the love as blest,
As when He said, Be still, and ocean sank to rest?

Woe to the wayward heart,
That gladlier turns to eye the shuddering start
Of Passion in her might,
Than marks the silent growth of grace and light;—
Pleased in the cheerless tomb
To linger, while the morning rays illume
Green lake, and cedar tuft, and spicy glade,
Shaking their dewy tresses now the storm is laid.

The storm is laid—and now
In His meek power He climbs the mountain's brow,
Who bade the waves go sleep,
And lashed the vexed fiends to their yawning deep.
How on a rock they stand,
Who watch His eye, and hold His guiding hand!
Not half so fixed, amid her vassal hills,
Rises the holy pile that Kedron's valley fills.

And wilt thou seek again
Thy howling waste, thy charnel-house and chain,
And with the demons be,
Rather than clasp thine own Deliverer's knee?
Sure 'tis no Heaven-bred awe
That bids thee from His healing touch withdraw;
The world and He are struggling in thine heart,
And in thy reckless mood thou biddest thy Lord depart.

[1] St. Mark v. 15; iv. 39.

He, merciful and mild,
As erst, beholding, loves His wayward child;
When souls of highest birth
Waste their impassioned might on dreams of earth,
He opens Nature's book,
And on His glorious Gospel bids them look,
Till by such chords, as rule the choirs above,
Their lawless cries are tuned to hymns of perfect love.

The Collect.

O God, who knowest us to be set in the midst of so many and great dangers, that by reason of the frailty of our nature we cannot always stand upright; Grant to us such strength and protection, as may support us in all dangers, and carry us through all temptations; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

THE STATE OF MIND OF THE WELL-TO-DO.

Consider, for instance, the general state of mind which is produced by affluent circumstances in the middle and upper classes of English society, at least during the early and middle years of life, while health is still unimpaired, and friends have not yet begun their long procession to the tomb. This state of mind is one of sincere satisfaction with this world just as it is—with its masses of poverty and suffering at the base of the social pyramid, and with a well-to-do class at the top, where life is curtained and pillowed in all the products of a high material civilisation. This satisfaction is not thankfulness to God expressing itself in active forms of charity; it is the tranquil sense of material comfort which would on no account be disturbed, either by the thought of the present care of others or by the prospect of its own future unsettlement and collapse.

Now, to such a state of mind the eternal future is not a welcome thought. Hell, of course, is out of the question; and, fresh from our drawing-rooms and our theatres, and, it may be, our casinos, we read our Histories of Civilisation, or our Histories of Rationalism in Europe, with sympathy and admiration, and pronounce hell a phantom which belongs to barbarous ages, when men loved torture for its own sake, and were burnt for witchcraft. Even heaven is not so certainly welcome, since the ascertained accounts of heaven do not tally accurately with our conceptions of a really enjoyable, that is to say, a materialised, existence. That repose in perpetual adoration of the Source of Light and Love seems tame and dull beside our round of excitements stimulated by and lavished upon created things; and in our secret hearts we prefer our present well-to-do life of comfort to the Paradise of the Bible. Thus wealth clogs all the finer spiritual sensibilities of the soul; and you see men, as the Psalmist says, whose hearts are "as fat as brawn," literally so cased and padded in the things of this life as to have lost altogether their sense of the supernatural. It was said by a great economist, Richard Cobden, of whom his countrymen and all Christians must ever speak with respect, whether or not they agree with his political opinions, "Sir, when I go to church there is one prayer which I say with my whole soul: 'In all time of our wealth, good Lord, deliver us!'" Ay, we have much reason to pray that prayer. "Deliver us from the quiet selfishness, deliver us from the grosser temptations, but deliver us, above all, from the blinding, numbing, paralysing power of easy circumstances, which make death and the great realities beyond it an unwelcome thought." If a man would deal fairly with revealed truth, he must at least enfranchise his will from slavery

to the material. How solemnly does the voice of the great apostle break in upon the tenor of our easy, comfortable existence:—"This I say, brethren, the time is short: it remaineth that both they that have wives be as though they had none; and they that weep as though they wept not; and they that rejoice as though they rejoiced not; and they that buy as though they possessed not; and they that use this world as not abusing it; for the fashion of this world passeth away."

Fifth Sunday after Epiphany.

Behold, the Lord's hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; neither His ear heavy that it cannot hear: but your iniquities have separated between you and your God.—*Isaiah* lix. 1, 2.

"Wake, arm divine! awake,
Eye of the only Wise!
Now for Thy glory's sake,
Saviour and God, arise,
And may Thine ear, that sealèd seems,
In pity mark our mournful themes!"

Thus in her lonely hour
Thy Church is fain to cry,
As if Thy love and power
Were vanished from her sky;
Yet God is there, and at His side
He triumphs, who for sinners died.

Ah! 'tis the world enthralls
The Heaven-betrothèd breast:
The traitor Sense recalls
The soaring soul from rest.
That bitter sigh was all for earth,
For glories gone, and vanished mirth.

Age would to youth return,
Farther from Heaven would be,
To feel the wildfire burn,
On idolising knee
Again to fall, and rob Thy shrine
Of hearts, the right of love divine.

Lord of this erring flock!
Thou whose soft showers distil
On ocean waste or rock,
Free as on Hermon hill,
Do Thou our craven spirits cheer,
And shame away the selfish tear.

'Twas silent all and dead[1]
Beside the barren sea,
Where Philip's steps were led,
Led by a voice from Thee—
He rose and went, nor asked Thee why,
Nor stayed to heave one faithless sigh:

Upon his lonely way
The high-born traveller came,
Reading a mournful lay
Of "One who bore our shame,[2]
Silent Himself, His name untold,
And yet His glories were of old."

To muse what Heaven might mean
His wondering brow he raised,
And met an eye serene
That on him watchful gazed.
No Hermit e'er so welcome crossed
A child's lone path in woodland lost.

[1] See Acts viii. 26–40. [2] Isaiah liii. 6–8.

Now wonder turns to love;
The scrolls of sacred lore
No darksome mazes prove;
The desert tires no more:
They bathe where holy waters flow,
Then on their way rejoicing go.

They part to meet in Heaven;
But of the joy they share,
Absolving and forgiven,
The sweet remembrance bear.
Yes—mark him well, ye cold and proud,
Bewildered in a heartless crowd,

Starting and turning pale
At Rumour's angry din—
No storm can now assail
The charm he wears within,
Rejoicing still, and doing good,
And with the thought of God imbued.

No glare of high estate,
No gloom of woe or want,
The radiance can abate
Where Heaven delights to haunt:
Sin only hides the genial ray,
And round the Cross makes night of day.

Then weep it from thy heart;
So mayst thou duly learn
The intercessor's part,
Thy prayers and tears may earn
For fallen souls some healing breath,
Ere they have died the Apostate's death.

The Collect.

O LORD, we beseech thee to keep thy Church and household continually in thy true religion; that they who do lean only upon the hope of thy heavenly grace may evermore be defended by thy mighty power; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

GOD, THE SOUL'S TRUE HOME.

"Lord, Thou hast been our refuge." This is the spirit of the very noblest occupation in which we can engage: it is the spirit of prayer. This acknowledgment underlies all the forms which the soul's intercourse with God is wont to take. Whether it be intercession for others, or praise of God's attributes, or thanksgiving for past mercies, or petition for new graces,—whether it be common prayer or private prayer,—whether it be expressed in stately liturgies, or breathed in thoughts and feelings which are beyond language,—whether it be an active movement of the soul's every power, or a tranquil contemplation of the one unchanging Eternal Being,—prayer is always, in its widest sense, an act by which the soul of man, here amid these changing scenes of time, seeks its true home and resting-place in seeking God. And as such it always ennobles men—not less now than in the earliest days of man's history. Now, as then, every man is all the better for honestly recognising the true conditions of his existence. God is not less necessary to the wisest of us than He was to our rudest forefathers. Our gilded civilisation is no sort of protection against the widespread misery around us,—"the changes and chances of this mortal life" which are the lot of us all. The realities of life force us to look beyond it,—to cry with Moses, "Lord, Thou has been our refuge from one generation to another."

Sixth Sunday after Epiphany.

Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that when He shall appear, we shall be like Him; for we shall see Him as He is.—1 *St John* iii. 2.

THERE are who, darkling and alone,
Would wish the weary night were gone,
Though dawning morn should only show
The secret of their unknown woe:
Who pray for sharpest throbs of pain
To ease them of doubt's galling chain:
"Only disperse the cloud," they cry,
"And if our fate be death, give light and let us die."[1]

Unwise I deem them, Lord, unmeet
To profit by Thy chastenings sweet,
For Thou wouldst have us linger still
Upon the verge of good or ill,
That on Thy guiding hand unseen
Our undivided hearts may lean,
And this our frail and foundering bark
Glide in the narrow wake of Thy belovèd ark.

'Tis so in war—the champion true
Loves victory more, when dim in view
He sees her glories gild afar
The dusky edge of stubborn war,
Than if the untrodden bloodless field
The harvest of her laurels yield;
Let not my bark in calm abide,
But win her fearless way against the chafing tide.

[1] Ἐν δὲ φάει καὶ ὀλέσσον.

'Tis so in love—the faithful heart
From her dim vision would not part,
When first to her fond gaze is given
That purest spot in Fancy's heaven,
For all the gorgeous sky beside,
Though pledged her own and sure t' abide:
Dearer than every past noon-day
That twilight gleam to her, though faint and far away.

So have I seen some tender flower
Prized above all the vernal bower,
Sheltered beneath the coolest shade,
Embosomed in the greenest glade,
So frail a gem, it scarce may bear
The playful touch of evening air;
When hardier grown we love it less,
And trust it from our sight, not needing our caress.

And wherefore is the sweet spring-tide
Worth all the changeful year beside?
The last-born babe, why lies its part
Deep in the mother's inmost heart?
But that the Lord and source of love
Would have His weakest ever prove
Our tenderest care—and most of all
Our frail immortal souls, His work and Satan's thrall.

So be it, Lord; I know it best,
Though not as yet this wayward breast
Beat quite in answer to Thy voice,
Yet surely I have made my choice;
I know not yet the promised bliss,
Know not if I shall win or miss;
So doubting, rather let me die,
Than close with aught beside, to last eternally.

What is the Heaven we idly dream?
The self-deceiver's dreary theme,
A cloudless sun that softly shines,
Bright maidens and unfailing vines,
The warrior's pride, the hunter's mirth,
Poor fragments all of this low earth:
Such as in sleep would hardly soothe
A soul that once had tasted of immortal truth.

What is the Heaven our God bestows,
No Prophet yet, no Angel knows;
Was never yet created eye
Could see across Eternity;
Not seraph's wing for ever soaring
Can pass the flight of souls adoring,
That nearer still and nearer grow
To the unapproachèd Lord, once made for them so low.

Unseen, unfelt their earthly growth,
And self-accused of sin and sloth
They live and die; their names decay,
Their fragrance passes quite away;
Like violets in the freezing blast
No vernal steam around they cast,—
But they shall flourish from the tomb,
The breath of God shall wake them into od'rous bloom.

Then on the incarnate Saviour's breast,
The fount of sweetness, they shall rest,
Their spirits every hour imbued
More deeply with His precious blood.
But peace—still voice and closèd eye
Suit best with hearts beyond the sky,
Hearts training in their low abode,
Daily to lose themselves in hope to find their God.

The Collect.

O God, whose blessed Son was manifested that he might destroy the works of the devil, and make us the sons of God, and heirs of eternal life; Grant us, we beseech thee, that, having this hope, we may purify ourselves, even as he is pure; that, when he shall appear again with power and great glory, we may be made like unto him in his eternal and glorious kingdom; where with thee, O Father, and thee, O Holy Ghost, he liveth and reigneth, ever one God, world without end. *Amen.*

NO PICKING AND CHOOSING IN THE THINGS OF GOD.

Reflect how dangerous it is to pick and choose in the things of God. It is not too much to say that some persons, who would be distressed at the idea that they were bad Christians, have no idea at all of the truth that the Christian Revelation, if accepted at all, must be accepted as a whole. They think and speak as if, in approaching the truths which God has set before us through His blessed Son, they were like intending purchasers entering a shop, perfectly at liberty to select whatever might strike their taste or fancy, and to reject the rest. The question of believing or rejecting belief appears to them a matter to be decided by personal bias or inclination, although, of course, in reality this is as unreasonable as it is irreverent—unreasonable, because all really revealed truth rests on exactly the same grounds, and recommends itself to a perfectly balanced mind; and irreverent, because to reject any part of Revelation is virtually to tell the Divine Revealer that He has set before the mind of His creature that which is either unnecessary or incredible. At the same time, it is true that some truths may be rejected with less ruin to the

entire fabric of faith than others; just as certain limbs of the human body may be amputated without destroying life, although they impair its perfectness, while others—the head, for example—cannot be parted with without instant death. Thus, too, mistakes may be made about the doctrines of grace or the meaning of large portions of Scripture without necessarily leading to fatal consequences. But to reject the resurrection is to cut at the root of Christian belief; it is to cease, as far as thought and faith go, to be a Christian at all. A Christ who never rose from His grave is not the Christ of the Bible or of Christendom. Such a Christ has nothing in common with our living and adorable Saviour except the name.

Septuagesima Sunday.

The invisible things of Him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made.—*Romans* i. 20.

THERE is a book, who runs may read,
Which heavenly truth imparts,
And all the lore its scholars need,
Pure eyes and Christian hearts.

The works of God above, below,
Within us and around,
Are pages in that book, to show
How God Himself is found.

The glorious sky embracing all
Is like the Maker's love,
Wherewith, encompassed, great and small,
In peace and order move.

The Moon above, the Church below,
A wondrous race they run,
But all their radiance, all their glow,
Each borrows of its Sun.

The Saviour lends the light and heat
That crowns His holy hill;
The saints, like stars, around His seat,
Perform their courses still.[1]

The saints above are stars in Heaven—
What are the saints on earth?
Like trees they stand whom God has given,[2]
Our Eden's happy birth.

Faith is their fixed unswerving root,
Hope their unfading flower,
Fair deeds of charity their fruit,
The glory of their bower.

The dew of Heaven is like Thy grace,[3]
It steals in silence down;
But where it lights, the favoured place
By richest fruits is known.

One name above all glorious names
With its ten thousand tongues
The everlasting sea proclaims,
Echoing angelic songs.

The raging Fire,[4] the roaring Wind,
Thy boundless power display:
But in the gentler breeze we find
Thy Spirit's viewless way.[5]

[1] Daniel xii. 3. [2] Isaiah lx. 21. [3] Psalm lxviii. 9.
[4] Hebrews xii. 29. [5] St. John iii. 8.

Two worlds are ours: 'tis only Sin
Forbids us to descry
The mystic heaven and earth within,
Plain as the sea and sky.

Thou, who hast given me eyes to see
And love this sight so fair,
Give me a heart to find out Thee,
And read Thee everywhere.

The Collect.

O LORD, we beseech thee favourably to hear the prayers of thy people; that we, who are justly punished for our offences, may be mercifully delivered by thy goodness, for the glory of thy Name; through Jesus Christ our Saviour, who liveth and reigneth with thee and the Holy Ghost, ever one God, world without end. *Amen.*

OUR INNER WORLD.

"What doest thou here?" To every human being, in his most serious moments, this question must be suggested. "Why am I doing what I do, thinking what I think, seeing what I see? What is the motive which shapes, which guides my life, making me do this rather than that, making me take this turn in life rather than the other, choosing these friends, throwing myself into these interests, into these trains of thought, into those associations, into those enterprises?" Something perhaps which may be determined by antecedent circumstances—that is to say, by the hand of God acting through accomplished events, and so far suspending or limiting personal liberty, but beyond this there is a margin in which we all are free. Even those who cannot in the least degree control their personal movements, since they are, for whatever reason, dependent upon

others, can entirely determine where they will be and what they will do in the sphere of thought and of purpose. We are all of us masters, if we will, of that inner world which each man carries about within him, and that world has its Carmel as well as its Horeb, no less than the outer world around us. And the serious question for every man is, whether, so far as he can judge, he is according to his measure of strength and opportunity endeavouring to do that portion of the will of God to which the circumstances which surround him, to which the powers and opportunities which have been given him clearly point as meant for him and for no other man to do. What it is exactly that engages each one of us matters comparatively little, if the motive to be doing God's will is actively recognised. It may be the most important duties in the Church or State, it may be the daily toil of the shop-boy or the domestic servant—all is equally ennobled if the great motive be there, all is equally degraded if the great motive be absent. "What would you do," a very good man was once asked, who was playing draughts with his little son, "if you knew that you would die in five minutes?" "I should finish this game of draughts," was the reply. Work and recreation are equally legitimate if each is treated as part of the will of God. If throughout life the awful significance of life, as the great gift for which we must surely account to our Maker, which has been purchased back from ruin by the incarnation and the death of our divine Redeemer, be steadily kept in view, there may be very good reasons for spending portions of it on Horeb as well as upon Carmel; but the essential point is that we should be where we are, that we should be doing what we do, because, so far as we know, He who has given us the gift of life wills thus, wills nothing else respecting us.

Sexagesima Sunday.

So He drove out the man; and He placed at the east of the garden of Eden cherubims, and a flaming sword which turned every way, to keep the way of the tree of life.—*Genesis* iii. 24; compare chap. vi.

FOE of mankind! too bold thy race:
Thou runnest at such a reckless pace,
Thine own dire work thou surely wilt confound:
'Twas but one little drop of sin
We saw this morning enter in,
And lo! at eventide the world is drowned.

See here the fruit of wandering eyes,
Of worldly longings to be wise,
Of passion dwelling on forbidden sweets:
Ye lawless glances, freely rove;
Ruin below and wrath above
Are all that now the wildering fancy meets.

Lord, when in some deep garden glade,
Of Thee and of myself afraid,
From thoughts like these among the bowers I hide,
Nearest and loudest then of all
I seem to hear the Judge's call:—
"Where art thou, fallen man? come forth, and be thou tried."

Trembling before Thee as I stand,
Where'er I gaze on either hand
The sentence is gone forth, the ground is cursed,
Yet mingled with the penal shower
Some drops of balm in every bower
Steal down like April dews, that softest fall and first.

If filial and maternal love[1]
Memorial of our guilt must prove,

[1] In sorrow thou shalt bring forth children.

If sinful babes in sorrow must be born,
Yet, to assuage her sharpest throes,
The faithful mother surely knows,
This was the way Thou cam'st to save the world forlorn.

If blessèd wedlock may not bless [1]
Without some tinge of bitterness
To dash her cup of joy, since Eden lost,
Chaining to earth with strong desire
Hearts that would highest else aspire,
And o'er the tenderer sex usurping ever most;

Yet by the light of Christian lore
'Tis blind Idolatry no more,
But a sweet help and pattern of true love,
Showing how best the soul may cling
To her immortal Spouse and King,
How He should rule, and she with full desire approve.

If niggard Earth her treasures hide,[2]
To all but labouring hands denied,
Lavish of thorns and worthless weeds alone,
The doom is half in mercy given
To train us in our way to Heaven,
And show our lagging souls how glory must be won.

If on the sinner's outward frame [3]
God hath impressed his mark of blame,
And e'en our bodies shrink at touch of light,
Yet Mercy hath not left us bare:
The very weeds we daily wear [4]
Are to Faith's eye a pledge of God's forgiving might.

[1] Thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee.
[2] Cursed is the ground for thy sake.
[3] I was afraid because I was naked.
[4] The Lord God made coats of skins, and clothed them.

And oh! if yet one arrow more,[1]
The sharpest of the Almighty's store,
Tremble upon the string—a sinner's death—
Art Thou not by to soothe and save,
To lay us gently in the grave,
To close the weary eye and hush the parting breath?

Therefore in sight of man bereft
The happy garden still was left,
The fiery sword that guarded showed it too,
Turning all ways, the world to teach,
That though as yet beyond our reach,
Still in its place the tree of life and glory grew.

The Collect.

O Lord God, who seest that we put not our trust in anything that we do; Mercifully grant that by thy power we may be defended against all adversity; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

THE CURE OF LOW SPIRITS.

Melancholy, we all know, is not, even from a purely natural point of view, strictly in order. There is something in us which proclaims it to be an intruder on the field of human nature, and which prompts us to challenge it, and bid it give an account of itself. Nor is it so unwonted a visitor in average lives that to do this would be a loss of time. The conventional cheerfulness which meets the eye is often the veil of a sternly repressed sadness; and young men who have not reached the noonday of life have been conscious of a depression which is not charmed away by the boisterous merriment in which it is

[1] Thou shalt surely die.

for the moment forgotten. The Psalmist's question is always a very practical one for a large number of human beings, "Why art thou so full of heaviness, O my soul? and why art thou so disquieted within me?"

. . . . . .

There are many secrets that are worth knowing, but none surely can better deserve our attention than the secret of the peace and joy of the soul. And there are many solemn words which reveal to us, in a sincere use of them, some features of our real condition; but nothing, perhaps, tells us more truly what and where we are than our power or our difficulty of saying with perfect deliberation these words of the General Thanksgiving, "We bless Thee for our creation, preservation, and all the blessings of this life; but above all for Thine inestimable love in the redemption of the world through our Lord Jesus Christ, for the means of grace, and for the hope of glory."

Quinquagesima Sunday.

I do set My bow in the cloud, and it shall be for a token of a covenant between Me and the earth.—*Genesis* ix. 13.

SWEET Dove! the softest, steadiest plume
In all the sunbright sky,
Brightening in ever-changeful bloom
As breezes change on high;—

Sweet Leaf! the pledge of peace and mirth,
"Long sought, and lately won,"
Blessed increase of reviving earth,
When first it felt the sun;—

Sweet Rainbow! pride of summer days,
High set at Heaven's command,
Though into drear and dusky haze
Thou melt on either hand;—

Dear tokens of a pardoning God,
We hail ye, one and all,
As when our fathers walked abroad,
Freed from their twelvemonth's thrall,

How joyful from the imprisoning ark
On the green earth they spring!
Not blither, after showers, the lark
Mounts up with glistening wing.

So home-bound sailors spring to shore,
Two oceans safely past;
So happy souls, when life is o'er,
Plunge in the empyreal vast.

What wins their first and fondest gaze
In all the blissful field,
And keeps it through a thousand days?
Love face to face revealed:

Love imaged in that cordial look
Our Lord in Eden bends
On souls that sin and earth forsook
In time to die His friends.

And what most welcome and serene
Dawns on the Patriarch's eye,
In all the emerging hills so green,
In all the brightening sky?

What but the gentle rainbow's gleam,
Soothing the wearied sight,
That cannot bear the solar beam,
With soft undazzling light.

Lord, if our fathers turned to Thee
With such adoring gaze,
Wondering frail man Thy light should see
Without Thy scorching blaze;

Where is our love, and where our hearts?
We who have seen Thy Son,
Have tried Thy Spirit's winning arts,
And yet we are not won.

The Son of God in radiance beamed
Too bright for us to scan,
But we may face the rays that streamed
From the mild Son of Man.

There, parted into rainbow hues,
In sweet harmonious strife,
We see celestial love diffuse
Its light o'er Jesus' life.

God, by His bow, vouchsafes to write
His truth in Heaven above;
As every lovely hue is Light,
So every grace is Love.

The Collect.

O Lord, who hast taught us that all our doings without charity are nothing worth; Send thy Holy Ghost, and pour into our hearts that most excellent gift of charity, the very

bond of peace and of all virtues, without which whosoever liveth is counted dead before thee: Grant this for thine only Son Jesus Christ's sake. *Amen.*

NATURE'S WHISPER—FAITH'S REPLY.

Most difficult indeed it is to the imagination to understand how this poor body, our companion for so many years, nay rather, part of our very selves, is to be first wrenched from us at death, and then restored to us, if we will, transfigured by the glory of the Son of God. Little indeed can we understand that inaccessibility to disease, that radiant beauty, that superiority to distance and material obstructions when moving through space, that spirituality, in short, which awaits, but which will not destroy it.

"Heavy and dull this frame of limbs and heart,
Whether slow creeping on cold earth, or borne
On lofty steed, or loftier prow, we dart
O'er wave or field: yet breezes laugh to scorn

"Our puny speed, and birds, and clouds in heaven,
And fish, like living shafts that pierce the main,
And stars that shoot through freezing air at even—
Who would but follow, might he break his chain?"

Such is Nature's whisper; but Faith replies:—

"And thou shalt break it soon. The grovelling worm
Shall find his wings and soar as fast and free
As his transfigured Lord—with lightning form
And snowy vest; such grace He won for thee,

"When from the grave He sprang at dawn of morn,
And led through boundless air thy conquering road,
Leaving a glorious track, where saints new-born
Might fearless follow to their blest abode."[1]

[1] *The Christian Year:* Twenty-third Sunday after Trinity.

Ash-Wednesday.

Whcn thou fastest, anoint thine head, and wash thy face; that thou appear not unto men to fast, but unto thy Father which is in secret. — *St. Matthew* vi. 17.

"YES, deep within and deeper yet
The rankling shaft of conscience hide;
Quick let the swelling eye forget
The tears that in the heart abide.
Calm be the voice, the aspect bold,
No shuddering pass o'er lip or brow;
For why should Innocence be told
The pangs that guilty spirits bow?

"The loving eye that watches thine
Close as the air that wraps thee round—
Why in thy sorrow should it pine,
Since never of thy sin it found?
And wherefore should the heathen see[1]
What chains of darkness thee enslave,
And mocking say, Lo, this is he
Who owned a God that could not save?"

Thus oft the mourner's wayward heart
Tempts him to hide his grief and die,
Too feeble for Confession's smart,
Too proud to bear a pitying eye;
How sweet, in that dark hour, to fall
On bosoms waiting to receive
Our sighs, and gently whisper all!
They love us—will not God forgive?

[1] Wherefore should they say among the people, Where is their God?— *Joel* ii. 17.

Else let us keep our fast within,
Till Heaven and we are quite alone,
Then let the grief, the shame, the sin,
Before the mercy-seat be thrown.
Between the porch and altar weep,
Unworthy of the holiest place,
Yet hoping near the shrine to keep
One lowly cell in sight of grace.

Nor fear lest sympathy should fail—
Hast thou not seen, in night-hours drear,
When racking thoughts the heart assail,
The glimmering stars by turns appear,
And from the eternal home above
With silent news of mercy steal?
So Angels pause on tasks of love,
To look where sorrowing sinners kneel.

Or if no Angel pass that way,
He who in secret sees, perchance
May bid His own heart-warming ray
Toward thee stream with kindlier glance,
As when upon His drooping head
His Father's light was poured from Heaven,
What time, unsheltered and unfed,[1]
Far in the wild His steps were driven.

High thoughts were with Him in that hour,
Untold, unspeakable on earth—
And who can stay the soaring power
Of spirits weaned from worldly mirth,
While far beyond the sound of praise
With upward eye they float serene
And learn to bear their Saviour's blaze
When Judgment shall undraw the screen?

[1] St. Matt. iv. 1.

The Collect.

ALMIGHTY and everlasting God, who hatest nothing that thou hast made, and dost forgive the sins of all them that are penitent; Create and make in us new and contrite hearts, that we worthily lamenting our sins, and acknowledging our wretchedness, may obtain of thee, the God of all mercy, perfect remission and forgiveness; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

THE DAY OF JUDGMENT.

In the world of moral estimates, as in the natural heavens, the stars vanish from sight at the rising of the sun. We listen to the din of human voices, to the wisdom, to the folly, to the inconsistencies, to the ever-changing notes of human opinion about men of the day, about our friends, about ourselves. And then the old Psalmist meets us with his descriptive prediction, "The Lord, even the most mighty God, hath spoken, and called the world from the rising of the sun to the going down thereof. Out of Zion hath God appeared: in perfect beauty. Our God shall come, and shall not keep silence. There shall go before Him a consuming fire, and a mighty tempest shall be stirred up round about Him. He shall call the heaven from above, and the earth, that He may judge His people." That is the true final court of appeal, which will be opened when Jesus, our divine Lord, appears in the clouds of heaven, coming to judgment. That will be the day of astonishing reversals of earthly judgments, when in a thousand ways, beyond the powers of our imagination to conceive, "the first shall be last, and the last first." In the thought of that day, all our human judgments, bad and good, private and public, confident and hesitating, erroneous and true, dwindle down into their proper insignificance. In

the thought of that day we learn, more and more clearly, that one thing is, beyond all others, worth living for—the pardon and approving verdict of the Eternal Judge, and that that verdict is, on the whole, best secured if while here, in this brief day of life, we turn a deaf ear to the voices of men, and unite ourselves more and more closely to Him who, in life and in death, is our wisdom and righteousness, and sanctification and redemption.

First Sunday in Lent.

Haste thee, escape thither; for I cannot do anything till thou be come thither. Therefore the name of the city was called Zoar.—*Genesis* xix. 22.

"ANGEL of wrath! why linger in mid air,
While the devoted city's cry
Louder and louder swells? and canst thou spare,
Thy full-charged vial standing by?"
Thus, with stern voice, unsparing Justice pleads:
He hears her not—with softened gaze
His eye is following where sweet Mercy leads,
And till she give the sign, his fury stays.

Guided by her along the mountain road,
Far through the twilight of the morn,
With hurrying footsteps from the accursed abode
He sees the holy household borne:
Angels, or more, on either hand are nigh,
To speed them o'er the tempting plain,
Lingering in heart, and with frail sidelong eye
Seeking how near they may unharmed remain.

"Ah! wherefore gleam those upland slopes so fair?
And why, through every woodland arch,

Swells yon bright vale, as Eden rich and rare,
Where Jordan winds his stately march;
If all must be forsaken, ruined all,
If God have planted but to burn?—
Surely not yet the avenging shower will fall,
Though to my home for one last look I turn."

Thus while they waver, surely long ago
They had provoked the withering blast,
But that the merciful Avengers know
Their frailty well, and hold them fast.
"Haste, for thy life escape, nor look behind"—
Ever in thrilling sounds like these
They check the wandering eye, severely kind,
Nor let the sinner lose his soul at ease.

And when, o'erwearied with the steep ascent,
We for a nearer refuge crave,
One little spot of ground in mercy lent,
One hour of home before the grave,
Oft in His pity o'er His children weak,
His hand withdraws the penal fire,
And where we fondly cling, forbears to wreak
Full vengeance, till our hearts are weaned entire.

Thus, by the merits of one righteous man,
The Church, our Zoar, shall abide,
Till she abuse so sore her lengthened span,
E'en Mercy's self her face must hide.
Then, onward yet a step, thou hard-won soul;
Though in the Church thou know thy place,
The mountain farther lies—there seek thy goal,
There breathe at large, o'erpast thy dangerous race.

Sweet is the smile of home; the mutual look
When hearts are of each other sure;
Sweet all the joys that crowd the household nook,
The haunt of all affections pure;
Yet in the world e'en these abide, and we
Above the world our calling boast:
Once gain the mountain-top, and thou art free:
Till then, who rest, presume; who turn to look, are lost.

The Collect.

O LORD, who for our sake didst fast forty days and forty nights; Give us grace to use such abstinence, that, our flesh being subdued to the Spirit, we may ever obey thy godly motions in righteousness, and true holiness, to thy honour and glory, who livest and reignest with the Father and the Holy Ghost, one God, world without end. *Amen.*

THE WHISPERS OF DOUBT AND OF FAITH.

Depend on it a time comes to many thoughtful young men and women, when they are tempted to think that what they have learnt in childhood about life and death, and God and Jesus Christ, and all that bears on our place in the eternal world, is uncertain; the shadow of an old creed which still haunts the earth; the echo of voices which ought wholly to have died away at the close of the Middle Ages. To many a young man the first visit to his mind of this terrible suspicion has brought real and keen agony in this our own day and country. But in every such trial to every sincere soul there is, I dare to say, a voice to be heard which still whispers, "Behold My hands and My feet, that it is I Myself: handle Me and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see Me have." You think, young man, that it is

the ghost of a religion confronts you. Handle it and you will see for yourself that it rests on a basis, at least as sure as any of the ordinary forms of human knowledge. It rests on history. The life, and death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ is not a work of the sanctified imagination of a later age. It is, at least, as much a part of the story of our race as are the life, the victories, the assassination of Julius Cæsar. Handle it searchingly but reverently and you will discern this for yourself. You will see that there is in it an intrinsic consistency, a solidity, a power of resistance to critical solvents, which you have not suspected. But do not suppose that, because it condescends to be thus tested by your understanding as regards its reality, it is therefore within the compass of your understanding as regards its scope. It begins with that which you can appraise; it ends with that which is beyond you: because while you are finite and bounded in your range of vision, it is an unveiling of the Infinite, of the Incomprehensible. Yes, Christianity plants its feet firmly on the soil of earth; its hands are seen again and again working in the stirring agencies of human history; but it rears its head towards the sky, it loses itself amidst the clouds of heaven. We see the very feet, the hands, the utter reality of the One Incomparable Life; but we only see enough to know assuredly that there is much more which is necessarily and utterly above us, since it is lost, as the apostle would say, in the majestic "depths of the riches both of the wisdom and of the knowledge of God."

PROVISION FOR THE HEART AND WILL.

If a man's religious wants are to be answered, his creed must speak, not merely to his intelligence, but to

his heart and will. He cannot really rest upon the most unimpeachable abstractions. He needs something warmer than the truest philosophy. He yearns to come in contact with a heart; and no religion, therefore, can really satisfy him which does not at least lead him to know and love a person. An unseen friend, who will purify and teach, and check and lead, and sustain him,—this is his great necessity. And this want, this last but deepest want of man's religious life, Christianity has satisfied. As humanity, "sitting in darkness and in the shadow of death," pleads with the Power whom it feels but cannot see—"Show Thou me the way that I should walk in, for I lift up my soul unto Thee"—lo! the heavens drop down from above, and the skies pour forth righteousness. And One fairer than the children of men presents Himself to all the centuries and countries of the world with the gracious bidding, "Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest."

Second Sunday in Lent.

And when Esau heard the words of his father, he cried with a great and exceeding bitter cry, and said unto his father, Bless me, even me also, O my father.—*Genesis* xxvii. 34. (Compare *Hebrews* xii. 17: He found no place of repentance, though he sought it carefully with tears.)[1]

"And is there in God's world so drear a place
Where the loud bitter cry is raised in vain?
Where tears of penance come too late for grace,
As on the uprooted flower the genial rain?"

[1] The author earnestly hopes that nothing in these stanzas will be understood to express any opinion as to the general efficacy of what is called "a death-bed repentance." Such questions are best left in the merciful obscu-

'Tis even so: the sovereign Lord of souls
Stores in the dungeon of His boundless realm
Each bolt that o'er the sinner vainly rolls
With gathered wrath the reprobate to whelm.

Will the storm hear the sailor's piteous cry,[1]
Taught to mistrust, too late, the tempting wave,
When all around he sees but sea and sky,
A God in anger, a self-chosen grave?

Or will the thorns, that strew intemperance' bed
Turn with a wish to down? will late remorse
Recall the shaft the murderer's hand has sped,
Or from the guiltless bosom turn its course?

Then may the unbodied soul in safety fleet
Through the dark curtains of the world above,
Fresh from the stain of crime; nor fear to meet
The God whom here she would not learn to love:

Then is there hope for such as die unblest,
That angel wings may waft them to the shore,
Nor need the unready virgin strike her breast,
Nor wait desponding round the bridegroom's door.

But where is then the stay of contrite hearts?
Of old they leaned on Thy Eternal Word,
But with the sinner's fear their hope departs,
Fast linked as Thy great Name to Thee, O Lord:

rity with which Scripture has enveloped them. Esau's probation, as far as his birthright was concerned, was quite over when he uttered the cry in the text. His despondency, therefore, is not parallel to anything on this side the grave.

[1] Compare Bp. Butler's Analogy, pp. 54–64, ed. 1736.

That Name, by which Thy faithful oath is past,
That we should endless be, for joy or woe:—
And if the treasures of Thy wrath could waste,
Thy lovers must their promised Heaven forego.

But ask of elder days, earth's vernal hour,
When in familiar talk God's voice was heard,
When at the Patriarch's call the fiery shower
Propitious o'er the turf-built shrine appeared.

Watch by our father Isaac's pastoral door—
The birthright sold, the blessing lost and won;
Tell, Heaven has wrath that can relent no more,
The Grave, dark deeds that cannot be undone.

We barter life for pottage; sell true bliss
For wealth or power, for pleasure or renown;
Thus, Esau-like, our Father's blessing miss,
Then wash with fruitless tears our faded crown.

Our faded crown, despised and flung aside,
Shall on some brother's brow immortal bloom;
No partial hand the blessing may misguide;
No flattering fancy change our Monarch's doom:

His righteous doom, that meek true-hearted Love
The everlasting birthright should receive,
The softest dews drop on her from above,[1]
The richest green her mountain garland weave:

Her brethren, mightiest, wisest, eldest born,
Bow to her sway, and move at her behest:
Isaac's fond blessing may not fall on scorn,
Nor Balaam's curse on Love, which God hath blest.

[1] Genesis xxvii. 27, 28.

The Collect.

ALMIGHTY GOD, who seest that we have no power of ourselves to help ourselves; Keep us both outwardly in our bodies, and inwardly in our souls; that we may be defended from all adversities which may happen to the body, and from all evil thoughts which may assault and hurt the soul; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

THE OBJECT OF RELIGION.

God being really alive, His existence is a fact with which no other fact that the human mind can come to recognise will possibly compare. Nothing among created things that can engage and stimulate thought, nothing that can warm and expand affection, nothing that can invigorate will and purpose, ought, in the judgment of any thinking human being, to compete with the Eternal God. Our reasonable duty towards God is "to believe in Him, to fear Him, and to love Him with all the heart, with all the mind, with all the soul, and with all the strength." And yet that unbegun, unending, self-existent Life; that boundless Intelligence administering a boundless Power; that long array of moral attributes which win our love while they must also move our reverence and fear; what is He, our God, to us? Do we thirst for God? As the days, and months, and years pass, do we ever look out of and beyond ourselves upon that vast ocean of Uncreated Life which encircles us, which penetrates our inmost selves? Do we ever think steadily, so as to dwell with a real intellectual interest, upon Him who is the first and highest of truths, to whose free bounty we ourselves owe the gift of existence, and to whom we must one day account for the use of it? Do we ever sincerely desire to love Him, and to live for

Him. Or are we constantly hurrying along our solitary path from one vanishing shape towards another, while we neglect the Alone Unchangeable? Be sure that, if we will, in God revealed in Christ, the soul may slake the thirst of ages; and the dreariest, and darkest, and most restless existence may find illumination and peace. "This God is our God for ever and ever: He will be our guide unto death and beyond it." To each one of us, now, He is, if we will—if we will, He will be, for ever, to each—the Eternal Truth, wherein thought can never find its limit; the Uncreated Beauty, "most Ancient yet always Fair," whereof affection can never tire: the Perfect Rule existing eternally in the Life of the Necessary Moral Being, whereunto each created will may perpetually conform itself, yet never exhaust its task. Without this Awful and Blessed Being, man has no adequate object, even during these days of his brief earthly existence; his thought, his affection, his purpose spring up and are exercised only that they may presently waste and die. With God, the human soul not merely interprets the secret of the universe; it comprehends, and is at peace with, itself. For God is the satisfaction of its thirst; He is the object of Religion.

Third Sunday in Lent.

When a strong man armed keepeth his palace, his goods are in peace; but when a stronger than he shall come upon him and overcome him, he taketh from him all his armour wherein he trusted, and divideth his spoils.—*St. Luke* xi. 21, 22.

SEE Lucifer like lightning fall,
Dashed from his throne of pride;
While, answering Thy victorious call,
The Saints his spoils divide;

This world of Thine, by him usurped too long,
Now opening all her stores to heal Thy servants' wrong.

So when the first-born of Thy foes
Dead in the darkness lay,
When Thy redeemed at midnight rose
And cast their bonds away,
The orphaned realm threw wide her gates, and told
Into freed Israel's lap her jewels and her gold.

And when their wondrous march was o'er
And they had won their homes,
Where Abraham fed his flock of yore,
Among their fathers' tombs;
A land that drinks the rain of Heaven at will,
Whose waters kiss the feet of many a vine-clad hill;—

Oft as they watched, at thoughtful eve,
A gale from bowers of balm
Sweep o'er the billowy corn, and heave
The tresses of the palm,
Just as the lingering sun had touched with gold,
Far o'er the cedar shade, some tower of giants old;

It was a fearful joy, I ween,
To trace the Heathen's toil,
The limpid wells, the orchards green,
Left ready for the spoil,
The household stores untouched, the roses bright
Wreathed o'er the cottage walls in garlands of delight.

And now another Canaan yields
To Thine all-conquering ark;—

Fly from the "old poetic" fields,[1]
Ye Paynim shadows dark!
Immortal Greece, dear land of glorious lays,
Lo! here the "unknown God" of thy unconscious praise!

The olive-wreath, the ivied wand,
"The sword in myrtles drest,"
Each legend of the shadowy strand
Now wakes a vision blest;
As little children lisp, and tell of Heaven,
So thoughts beyond their thought to those high Bards were given.

And these are ours: Thy partial grace
The tempting treasure lends:
These relics of a guilty race
Are forfeit to Thy friends:
What seemed an idol hymn, now breathes of Thee,
Tuned by Faith's ear to some celestial melody.

There's not a strain to Memory dear,[2]
Nor flower in classic grove,
There's not a sweet note warbled here,
But minds us of Thy love.
O Lord, our Lord, and spoiler of our foes,
There is no light but Thine: with Thee all beauty glows.

The Collect.

WE beseech Thee, Almighty God, look upon the hearty desires of thy humble servants, and stretch forth the right hand of thy Majesty, to be our defence against all our enemies; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

[1] Where each old poetic mountain
Inspiration breathed around.—*Gray.*

[2] See Burns's Works, i. 293, Dr. Currie's edition.

THE ETERNAL FUTURE.

Man, then, is a spirit, and, as it would seem, he is as such immediately created by God. The gravest question yet remains: What is his destiny? Whatever may be said of the importance of questions bearing on the soul's origin, no reflecting man will deny the interest of all that bears upon its future. It is true that even this question is ostentatiously set aside on the ground of its being unpractical to discuss it. "The dead," it is argued, "do not return to tell us their experience. What then can be known certainly of that which befalls them? We may hope or we may conjecture, we may desire or despair, we may dogmatise in the air and make creeds of our aspirations; but would it not be better to confine ourselves to subjects that are well within the range of our experience, and where sure results are attainable, than to waste time and sympathy upon that which belongs really and only to the realm of fancy?"

This way of treating the subject is possible and not uncommon among young men and women in good health who have never known a heartache, and in the pages of clever serials, where readers are carried forward almost unresistingly, by clear type and well-turned sentences, over the dreary wastes of sceptical thought. But the question of the eternal future is too pressing to be thus left at a distance permanently. If religion has many enemies in the predominant tendencies of the modern world, she certainly has steady and inalienable allies in the permanent circumstances of human nature. To the most refined and cultured of ourselves death is just as certain a contingency as it was to our rudest forefathers, and its dread solemnities enter just as penetratingly into the homes of rank and science as into the humblest cot-

tages in the land. Sooner or later it comes close to all of us, and the mists which hide its stern realities from our eyes roll away, and leave us face to face with them.

Fourth Sunday in Lent.

Joseph made haste; for his bowels did yearn upon his brother; and he sought where to weep; and he entered into his chamber, and wept there.—*Genesis* xliii. 30.

There stood no man with him, while Joseph made himself known unto his brethren.—*Genesis* xlv. 1.

When Nature tries her finest touch,
Weaving her vernal wreath,
Mark ye how close she veils her round,
Not to be traced by sight or sound,
Nor soiled by ruder breath?

Who ever saw the earliest rose
First open her sweet breast?
Or, when the summer sun goes down,
The first soft star in evening's crown
Light up her gleaming crest?

Fondly we seek the dawning bloom
On features wan and fair,—
The gazing eye no change can trace,
But look away a little space,
Then turn, and lo! 'tis there.

But there's a sweeter flower than e'er
Blushed on the rosy spray—
A brighter star, a richer bloom
Than e'er did western heaven illume
At close of summer day.

'Tis Love, the last best gift of Heaven;
Love, gentle, holy, pure;
But, tenderer than a dove's soft eye,
The searching sun, the open sky,
She never could endure.

E'en human Love will shrink from sight
Here in the coarse rude earth:
How then should rash intruding glance
Break in upon *her* sacred trance
Who boasts a heavenly birth?

So still and secret is her growth,
Ever the truest heart,
Where deepest strikes her kindly root
For hope or joy, for flower or fruit,
Least knows its happy part.

God only, and good angels, look
Behind the blissful screen—
As when, triumphant o'er his woes,
The Son of God by moonlight rose,
By all but Heaven unseen:

As when the holy Maid beheld
Her risen Son and Lord;
Thought has not colours half so fair
That she to paint that hour may dare,
In silence best adored.

The gracious Dove, that brought from Heaven
The earnest of our bliss,
Of many a chosen witness telling,
On many a happy vision dwelling,
Sings not a note of this.

So, truest image of the Christ,
Old Israel's long-lost son,
What time, with sweet forgiving cheer,
He called his conscious brethren near,
Would weep with them alone.

He could not trust his melting soul
But in his Maker's sight—
Then why should gentle hearts and true
Bare to the rude world's withering view
Their treasure of delight!

No, let the dainty rose awhile
Her bashful fragrance hide;
Rend not her silken veil too soon,
But leave her, in her own soft noon,
To flourish and abide.

The Collect.

GRANT, we beseech thee, Almighty God, that we, who for our evil deeds do worthily deserve to be punished, by the comfort of thy grace may mercifully be relieved; through our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. *Amen.*

LOVE IS POWER.

Love is indeed the very muscle and fibre of moral force. If the condition of mankind at large is bettered, this is effected by men who love their fellow-men. If goodness is embodied in life and character, this is by those who begin by seeing, however imperfectly, the beauty of goodness, and are enamoured of it before they try to make it their own. If truth is sought and found amid and across difficulties which have seemed insuperable, this is by intellects to which truth has presented itself as an object in itself so beautiful as to win the love

of their hearts. And if Mary rose in the dark night to visit the grave of her slain Master, and to pay him such honours as her poverty could yield, this was because her soul was on fire with the moral power of a strong and pure affection, which was to be rewarded presently by the attainment of its object.

All this might well seem commonplace truth, but it requires to be asserted from time to time, and not less in our own day than in past years. The moral power of love—love for goodness—love for human kind—love for right as against wrong—love for truth as against falsehood—is sometimes discredited among us under a new title. "Beware," men say, "of being led away by emotion. Emotion—it is for women, for the unthinking, for the young: it deserves no recognition in the life and conduct of a grown-up, well-instructed, thoughtful man. A man should be swayed only, entirely by reason, or by what he conceives to be rational. He has as little to do with emotional motives as with the toys of his childhood, or as with the dress of his wife."

Here observe, first of all, an assumption which is by no means warrantable—that emotion is always another name for love. True, all love is emotion of a certain kind, but all emotions are by no means love. Emotion may be vulgar passion: it may be violent hate: it may be passion and hate which, for the moment, are posing in the garb of some unimpassioned philosophy. And emotion is by no means always power. It may be the very expenditure and forfeiture of power. It may be as unfruitful as any speculation respecting the unknowable and the unattainable that ever haunted the brain of a pedant. But love *is* power. This concentration of purified desire upon a strictly noble object does move—does constrain the resources and faculties of man—does summon

a man to make the very utmost of his manhood, whether it be by work or by endurance, and therefore love, so far from being the monopoly of women or of children, is the very grace of the strongest and of the noblest manliness. Love kindles reason itself into activity. Love gives nerve and impulse to will. Woe to the man who is without love—without enthusiasm! Woe to him, above all, if he glories in his deprivation—if the glow of a strong love for goodness or for truth in others only provokes in him a smile or a sneer. Little as he may think it, his intellect, or his common sense, is a poor and feeble instrument for all practical purposes when thus divorced from love. Little as he may suspect it, his manhood is most surely impoverished. He has parted with the very secret of its strength. He has done his best when he has raised a laugh at the cost of men who pursue what they believe to be true and good with steady enthusiasm; but he will himself never achieve anything solid or great for the good of his fellow-creatures, or for the glory of his God. It is love now, as in the days of Mary Magdalene, which outlives difficulty—which conquers disappointment, for Mary's words do breathe cruel disappointment. Mere curiosity would have been tranquil when Mary was in an agony. Mary is so disappointed because she loves. "They have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid Him."

Fifth Sunday in Lent.

And Moses said, I will now turn aside, and see this great sight, why the bush is not burnt.—*Exodus* iii. 3.

THE historic Muse, from age to age,
Through many a waste heart-sickening page
Hath traced the works of man:

But a celestial call to-day
Stays her, like Moses, on her way,
The works of God to scan.

Far seen across the sandy wild,
Where, like a solitary child,
He thoughtless roamed and free,
One towering thorn [1] was wrapt in flame—
Bright without blaze it went and came:
Who would not turn and see?

Along the mountain-ledges green
The scattered sheep at will may glean
The Desert's spicy stores:
The while, with undivided heart,
The shepherd talks with God apart,
And, as he talks, adores.

Ye too, who tend Christ's wildering flock,
Well may ye gather round the rock
That once was Sion's hill:
To watch the fire upon the mount
Still blazing, like the solar fount,
Yet unconsuming still.

Caught from that blaze by wrath divine,
Lost branches of the once-loved vine,
Now withered, spent, and sere,
See Israel's sons, like glowing brands,
Tossed wildly o'er a thousand lands
For twice a thousand year.

God will not quench nor slay them quite,
But lifts them like a beacon light
The apostate Church to scare;

[1] "Seneh:" said to be a sort of Acacia.

Or like pale ghosts that darkling roam,
Hovering around their ancient home,
But find no refuge there.

Ye blessèd Angels! if of you
There be, who love the ways to view
Of Kings and Kingdoms here;
(And sure, 'tis worth an Angel's gaze,
To see, throughout that dreary maze,
God teaching love and fear:)

Oh say, in all the bleak expanse,
Is there a spot to win your glance,
So bright, so dark as this?
A hopeless faith, a homeless race,
Yet seeking the most holy place,
And owning the true bliss?

Salted with fire they seem,[1] to show
How spirits lost in endless woe
May undecaying live.
Oh, sickening thought! yet hold it fast
Long as this glittering world shall last,
Or sin at heart survive.

And hark! amid the flashing fire,
Mingling with tones of fear and ire,
Soft Mercy's undersong—
'Tis Abraham's God who speaks so loud,
His people's cries have pierced the cloud,
He sees, He sees their wrong;[2]

He is come down to break their chain;
Though never more on Sion's fane
His visible ensign wave;

[1] St. Mark ix. 49. [2] Exod. iii. 7, 8.

'Tis Sion, wheresoe'er they dwell,
Who, with His own true Israel,
Shall own Him strong to save.

He shall redeem them one by one,
Where'er the world-encircling sun
Shall see them meekly kneel:
All that He asks on Israel's part,
Is only, that the captive heart
Its woe and burthen feel.

Gentiles! with fixed yet awful eye
Turn ye this page of mystery,
Nor slight the warning sound:
"Put off thy shoes from off thy feet—
The place where man his God shall meet,
Be sure, is holy ground."

The Collect.

We beseech thee, Almighty God, mercifully to look upon thy people; that by thy great goodness they may be governed and preserved evermore, both in body and soul; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

WHAT PRAYER INVOLVES.

The question whether God hears prayer, is at bottom the question whether He is really alive; whether in any true sense of the term He exists at all. No word is used more equivocally than the word "God" in the present day. If by "God" we mean only a product of the thought or consciousness of man, to which it cannot be certainly presumed that any being actually corresponds: the highest thought of man—yet only man's

highest thought; then there is of course no one who can hear us. It has been said that if a man talks out loud to himself, apostrophising what are in truth only his own conceptions, it is difficult not to credit him with a certain tinge of madness; and it would be just as practical to address our prayer to the carved and gilded idols of Babylon, whose manufacture roused the sternest satire of the Evangelical Prophet, as to the unreal abstractions, which, labelled with the Most Holy Name, are sent us from the intellectual workshops, ancient and modern, of Alexandria or of Berlin. And if by "God" is meant only the unseen force of the universe, or its collective forces; if He is the principle of growth in the plant, the life-principle in the animal or in man; we need not read Spinoza in order to convince ourselves of the fruitlessness of prayer. A self-existing force or cause, if such can be conceived, without intelligence, without personality, of course without any moral attributes, may be a thing to wonder at, but it certainly is not a Being to speak to. We may of course ejaculate to such a thing if we like; but we might just as well say litanies to the winds or to the ocean. The question may be safely left to our utilitarian instincts. Time and strength, after all, are limited, and we shall not in the long run spend "our money," at least in this direction, "for that which is not bread, or our labour for that which satisfieth not."

If, on the other hand, God exists, whether we think about Him or not; if He be not merely the mightiest force, the first of causes, but something more; if He be a Personal Being, thinking with no limit to His thought, and willing with no fetters around His liberty; then surely we may reach Him if we will. What is to prevent it? Cannot we men, at our pleasure, embody our thought, our feeling, our desires, our purposes in language,

and so make them pass into and be apprehended by the created finite personalities around us? Where is the barrier that shall arrest thought, longings, desires, entreaties, not as yet clothed (why need they be clothed?) in speech, as they mount up from the soul towards the all-embracing Intelligence of God? And if God be not merely an infinite Intelligence, but a moral Being, a mighty Heart, so that justice, and mercy, and tenderness are attributes of His character, then to appeal to Him in virtue of these attributes is assuredly to appeal to Him to some purpose. If an omnipresent Intelligence is a sufficient guarantee of His being able to hear us, an interest such as Justice and Mercy imply on His part towards creatures who depend upon Him for the original gift, and for the continued maintenance of life, is a guarantee of His willingness to do so.

OUR REASONABLE PRAYERS.

No; to pray for rain or sunshine, for health or food, is just as reasonable as to pray for gifts which the soul only can receive—increased love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith. All such prayers pre-suppose the truth that God is not the slave of His own rules of action; that He can innovate upon His work without forfeiting His perfection; that law is only our way of conceiving of His regularised working, and not an external force which governs and moulds what we recognise as His work. It dissolves into thin air as we look hard at it, this fancied barrier of inexorable law; and as the mist clears off, beyond there is the throne of the Moral King of the universe, in whose eyes material symmetry is as nothing when compared with the spiritual well-being of His moral creatures.

Palm Sunday.

And He answered and said unto them, I tell you that, if these should hold their peace, the stones would immediately cry out.—*St. Luke* xix. 40.

Ye whose hearts are beating high
With the pulse of Poesy,
Heirs of more than royal race,
Framed by Heaven's peculiar grace,
God's own work to do on earth
(If the word be not too bold),
Giving virtue a new birth,
And a life that ne'er grows old—

Sovereign masters of all hearts!
Know ye, who hath set your parts?
He who gave you breath to sing,
By whose strength ye sweep the string,
He hath chosen you to lead
His Hosannas here below;—
Mount, and claim your glorious meed;
Linger not with sin and woe.

But if ye should hold your peace,
Deem not that the song would cease—
Angels round His glory-throne,
Stars, His guiding hand that own,
Flowers that grow beneath our feet,
Stones in earth's dark womb that rest,
High and low in choir shall meet,
Ere His Name shall be unblest.

Lord, by every minstrel tongue
Be Thy praise so duly sung,

That Thine angels' harps may ne'er
Fail to find fit echoing here:
We the while, of meaner birth,
Who in that divinest spell
Dare not hope to join on earth,
Give us grace to listen well.

But should thankless silence seal
Lips, that might half Heaven reveal,
Should bards in idol-hymns profane
The sacred soul-enthralling strain
(As in this bad world below
Noblest things find vilest using),
Then, Thy power and mercy show,
In vile things noble breath infusing;

Then waken into sound divine
The very pavement of Thy shrine,
Till we, like Heaven's star-sprinkled floor,
Faintly give back what we adore:
Childlike though the voices be,
And untunable the parts,
Thou wilt own the minstrelsy,
If it flow from childlike hearts.

The Collect.

ALMIGHTY and everlasting God, who, of thy tender love towards mankind, hast sent thy Son, our Saviour Jesus Christ, to take upon him our flesh, and to suffer death upon the cross, that all mankind should follow the example of his great humility; Mercifully grant, that we may both follow the example of his patience, and also be made partakers of his resurrection; through the same Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

THE LORD'S SONG.

Is not the Christian soul often carried captive now-a-days into the Babylon of unbelief or of half belief? Is not the place in our thoughts which is due to God often tenanted by abstractions which are just as senseless as the idols of Babylon—creations, it is true, of our thoughts, instead of being creations of our fingers? Nature, force, law, and what not, generalisations of our own minds—as we look out upon the universe around us, these are too often placed upon the throne of the One Infinite, Eternal, Self-existent Being; or if any Christianity is left, it is a Christianity which, it would seem, is too often certain of no one article of the Christian creed,—a mere feeble, vague sentiment; a modern Christianity which is the consecration, not of faith, but, forsooth, of doubt. "Are the sacraments means of grace?" "There is no saying." "Is the Bible inspired?" "Possibly." "Is the blood of Christ an atoning and a cleansing power?" "Perhaps." "Is Jesus Christ true God as well as true man?" "There is something to be said for it." "Does the Holy Spirit of this our Saviour sanctify the hearts of Christians?" "It is not quite impossible that it does." "Is God Three and yet One?" "We must not be too dogmatic about it." "Is He a personal Being, or only a supreme tendency making for righteousness?" "Who shall say, since the literary men hesitate?"

Oh, who shall sing the song of the Lord in such a strange land of half-belief as this? To whom are we to sing it? What are we to sing about? How can we go to work at all where all is so vague and uncertain, where nothing is clear above our heads, and where nothing is solid, it would appear, beneath our feet?

"The Lord's song," indeed! Certainly, if we are to sing the *Te Deum*, or *Gloria in Excelsis*, as our fathers did, we must be *bonâ fide* Christians; men who really believe with their whole hearts that the creed of Christendom is true. We may do much else of a different kind, no doubt, in this state of mind, which just consents to a tribute of qualified probability to the Christian faith, or to certain parts of it; but as for singing the Lord's song with that kind of sincerity which is owned in heaven, the thing is impossible.

Monday before Easter.

Doubtless Thou art our Father, though Abraham be ignorant of us, and Israel acknowledge us not.—*Isaiah* lxiii. 16.

"Father to me Thou art and Mother dear,
And Brother too, kind Husband of my heart"—
So speaks Andromache [1] in boding fear,
Ere from her last embrace her hero part—
So evermore, by Faith's undying glow,
We own the Crucified in weal or woe.

Strange to our ears the church-bells of our home;
The fragrance of our own paternal fields
May be forgotten; and the time may come
When the babe's kiss no sense of pleasure yields
E'en to the doting mother: but Thine own
Thou never canst forget, nor leave alone.

There are who sigh that no fond heart is theirs,
None loves them best—O vain and selfish sigh!
Out of the bosom of His love He spares—
The Father spares the Son, for thee to die:

[1] Iliad, vi. 429.

For thee He died—for thee He lives again:
O'er thee He watches in His boundless reign.

Thou art as much His care, as if beside
Nor man nor angel lived in Heaven or earth:
Thus sunbeams pour alike their glorious tide
To light up worlds, or wake an insect's mirth:
They shine and shine with unexhausted store—
Thou art thy Saviour's darling—seek no more.

On thee and thine, thy warfare and thine end,
E'en in His hour of agony He thought,
When, ere the final pang His soul should rend,
The ransomed spirits one by one were brought
To His mind's eye—two silent nights and days[1]
In calmness for His far-seen hour He stays.

Ye vaulted cells, where martyred seers of old
Far in the rocky walls of Sion sleep,
Green terraces and archèd fountains cold,
Where lies the cypress shade so still and deep,
Dear sacred haunts of glory and of woe,
Help us, one hour, to trace His musings high and low:

One heart-ennobling hour! It may not be:
The unearthly thoughts have passed from earth away,
And fast as evening sunbeams from the sea
Thy footsteps all in Sion's deep decay
Were blotted from the holy ground: yet dear
Is every stone of hers; for Thou wast surely here.

There is a spot within this sacred dale
That felt Thee kneeling—touched Thy prostrate brow:

[1] In Passion-week from Tuesday evening to Thursday evening, during which time Scripture seems to be nearly silent concerning our Saviour's proceedings.

One Angel knows it. O might prayer avail
To win that knowledge! sure each holy vow
Less quickly from the unstable soul would fade,
Offered where Christ in agony was laid.

Might tear of ours once mingle with the blood
That from His aching brow by moonlight fell,
Over the mournful joy our thoughts would brood,
Till they had framed within a guardian spell
To chase repining fancies, as they rise,
Like birds of evil wing, to mar our sacrifice.

So dreams the heart self-flattering, fondly dreams;—
Else wherefore, when the bitter waves o'erflow,
Miss we the light, Gethsemane, that streams
From thy dear name, where in His page of woe
It shines, a pale kind star in winter's sky?
Who vainly reads it there, in vain had seen Him die.

THE BEARING OF RELIGION ON OUTWARD THINGS.

Religion, in order to meet the wants of human nature, will take account of each element in man's nature: she will maintain lower relations with the bodies as well as higher relations with the souls of men. As man has, besides his unseen person, an outward and visible shape, so will religion herself provide sensible forms as well as supersensuous realities. She will exact outward as well as inward reverence, because in a being constituted like man, the one is really the condition of the other. There are bodily postures which absolutely forbid heavenly exercises to the soul: to lounge in an arm-chair is inconsistent with the tension of thought and will which belongs to adoration of the Most Holy. Religion, like

man himself, is a beautiful spirit tabernacling in a body of sense. Her divine and immutable truths are shrouded beneath the unrivalled poetry of Bible language; her treasures of grace beneath the outward and visible signs which meet us in sacraments. She proclaims the invisible by that which meets the eye; she heralds the eternal harmonies by a music that falls upon the ear. She certainly is not all form, for man is not a brute; but also she is not all spirit, for man is not an angel. She deals with man as being precisely what he is, and she enlists the lower faculties of his being in aid of the higher. Yet if she is true to man and to herself, she never allows her disciple to forget the unseen in the seen, the inward in the outward, the soul in the body. For religious purposes the soul must always be incomparably of the highest importance, as being the very man himself; the man in the secret recesses of his being; the man at the imperishable centre of his life; the man as he lives beneath the Eye, and enters into relations with the Heart of His Infinite Creator.

Certainly, if belief in our personal spirits is essential to religion, and belief in the immediate creation of the soul by God is stimulating to it, belief in the soul's immortality is of yet higher religious importance. The relation between God and the soul, in which religion consists, would be little more to us than a sentiment or a literary taste, if we were persuaded that we should have taken leave of it, as we shall have taken leave of our clothes and of our books, when we are laid in our coffins. Would religion be worth our attention as serious men, would it be anything more than a plaything, if all really ended at death? That the soul is immortal, standing in its immortality, for weal or woe, face to face with the Everlasting God;—this truth, dimly grasped by

natural religion, has been wrought into the very heart and fibre of Christendom. It is taken for granted by Christian faith just as naturally as is the fact of life itself. It underlies that sense of an eternal life which good men already enjoy here, and which implies not simply a consciousness that admits of no idea of succession or time, but an immortal soul in fixed communion with an Eternal Object. It teaches man to look upon all the acts and habits which really feed and strengthen religion as a part of his preparation and outfit for eternity, to be in some sense carried with him as he crosses the heights which form his present horizon, and which shut out from his view the eternal world. And thus it has elevated and enriched human nature in a thousand ways, which we only do not sufficiently appreciate because we are so entirely accustomed to them.

Tuesday before Easter.

They gave Him to drink wine mingled with myrrh; but He received it not.—*St. Mark* xv. 23.

"FILL high the bowl, and spice it well, and pour
The dews oblivious: for the Cross is sharp,
The Cross is sharp, and He
Is tenderer than a lamb.

"He wept by Lazarus' grave—how will He bear
This bed of anguish? and His pale weak form
Is worn with many a watch
Of sorrow and unrest.

"His sweat last night was as great drops of blood,
And the sad burthen pressed Him so to earth,
The very torturers paused
To help Him on His way.

"Fill high the bowl, benumb His aching sense
With medicined sleep."—O awful in Thy woe!
The parching thirst of death
Is on Thee, and Thou triest

The slumberous potion bland, and wilt not drink:
Not sullen, nor in scorn, like haughty man
With suicidal hand
Putting his solace by:

But as at first Thine all-pervading look
Saw from Thy Father's bosom to the abyss,
Measuring in calm presage
The infinite descent;

So to the end, though now of mortal pangs
Made heir, and emptied of Thy glory awhile,
With unaverted eye
Thou meetest all the storm.

Thou wilt feel all, that Thou mayest pity all;
And rather wouldst Thou wrestle with strong pain,
Than overcloud Thy soul,
So clear in agony,

Or lose one glimpse of Heaven before the time.
O most entire and perfect sacrifice,
Renewed in every pulse
That on the tedious Cross

Told the long hours of death, as, one by one,
The life-strings of that tender heart gave way;
E'en sinners, taught by Thee,
Look Sorrow in the face,

And bid her freely welcome, unbeguiled
By false kind solaces, and spells of earth:
And yet not all unsoothed;
For when was Joy so dear,

As the deep calm that breathed, "*Father, forgive,*"
Or, "*Be with Me in Paradise to-day?*"
And, though the strife be sore,
Yet in His parting breath

Love masters Agony; the soul that seemed
Forsaken, feels her present God again,
And in her Father's arms
Contented dies away.

GOD AND THE SOUL.

The knowledge and love and service of our Maker is not, like the indulgence of a sentiment or a taste, a matter of choice. For every man who looks God and life steadily in the face, it is a stern necessity. We can do without large incomes, and a high social position, and a name among men. Length of days, and health of body, and elasticity of mind, are great blessings; yet they may be dispensed with. But once born, we *must* serve God. Not to serve God is to be in the moral world that which a deformity or monster is in the world of animal existence. It is not only to defy the claims of God; it is to ignore the plain demands of our inner being, to do violence to the highest guidance of our mysterious and complex life.

Wednesday before Easter.

Saying, Father, if Thou be willing, remove this cup from Me: nevertheless not My will, but Thine, be done.—*St. Luke* xxii. 42.

O Lord my God, do Thou Thy holy will—
I will lie still—
I will not stir, lest I forsake Thine arm,
And break the charm,
Which lulls me, clinging to my Father's breast,
In perfect rest.

Wild Fancy, peace! thou must not me beguile
With thy false smile:
I know thy flatteries and thy cheating ways;
Be silent, Praise,
Blind guide with siren voice, and blinding all
That hear thy call.

Come, Self-devotion, high and pure,
Thoughts that in thankfulness endure,
Though dearest hopes are faithless found,
And dearest hearts are bursting round.
Come, Resignation, spirit meek,
And let me kiss thy placid cheek,
And read in thy pale eye serene
Their blessing, who by faith can wean
Their hearts from sense, and learn to love
God only, and the joys above.

They say, who know the life divine,
And upward gaze with eagle eyne,

That by each golden crown on high,[1]
Rich with celestial jewelry,
Which for our Lord's redeemed is set,
There hangs a radiant coronet,
All gemmed with pure and living light,
Too dazzling for a sinner's sight,
Prepared for virgin souls, and them
Who seek the martyr's diadem.

Nor deem, who to that bliss aspire,
Must win their way through blood and fire.
The writhings of a wounded heart
Are fiercer than a foeman's dart.
Oft in Life's stillest shade reclining,
In Desolation unrepining,
Without a hope on earth to find
A mirror in an answering mind,
Meek souls there are, who little dream
Their daily strife an Angel's theme,
Or that the rod they take so calm
Shall prove in Heaven a martyr's palm.

And there are souls that seem to dwell
Above this earth—so rich a spell
Floats round their steps, where'er they move,
From hopes fulfilled and mutual love.
Such, if on high their thoughts are set,
Nor in the stream the source forget,
If prompt to quit the bliss they know,
Following the Lamb where'er He go,

[1] . . . "that little coronet or special reward which God hath prepared (extraordinary and besides the great Crown of all faithful souls) for those 'who have not defiled themselves with women, but follow the (virgin) Lamb for ever.'"—*Bp. Taylor, Holy Living*, ch. xi. sect. 3.

By purest pleasures unbeguiled
To idolise or wife or child;
Such wedded souls our God shall own
For faultless virgins round His throne.

Thus everywhere we find our suffering God,
And where He trod
May set our steps: the Cross on Calvary
Uplifted high
Beams on the martyr host, a beacon light
In open fight.

To the still wrestlings of the lonely heart
He doth impart
The virtue of His midnight agony,
When none was nigh,
Save God and one good Angel, to assuage
The tempest's rage.

Mortal! if life smile on thee, and thou find
All to thy mind,
Think, who did once from Heaven to Hell descend
Thee to befriend:
So shalt thou dare forego, at His dear call,
Thy best, thine all.

O Father! not My will, but Thine be done!"
So spake the Son.
Be this our charm, mellowing earth's ruder noise
Of griefs and joys;
That we may cling for ever to Thy breast
In perfect rest!

THE VISITATION OF GOD.

We know what a man means when, speaking of his bodily health, he tells us that he has had a "warning." He means that some symptom of latent disease has shown

itself, some unsuspected weakness in the system, some failure of strength which points to greater care respecting the diet, or exercise, or sleep, or work; and if no attention is paid to the "warning," we need not be doctors in order to know what sooner or later is likely to follow. And so, in the moral and spiritual life, God's ways of visiting us are many. There are two in particular which it is well to bear in mind. One is friendship —the influence of a powerful character granted us for a few years or less, and then withdrawn. We never noticed how that friendship came about. Events led to acquaintance, acquaintance deepened into an intimacy, and then change of circumstances or of home, or death, put an end to it. At the time it was difficult—so we say—to see in that anything remarkable, all was so natural, all was so commonplace; and yet, as we look back on it, we can clearly see what was remarkable. A real influence has been withdrawn, designed, as we can now see, to enforce on us some neglected truth, to cure us of some serious fault, to make some vital difference in the direction of our life or in the ingredients of character. It has been withdrawn, and for us that day of visitation has passed; and the solemn question is, With what result?

And another such visitation is a serious illness. There are two ways of looking at an illness. We may trace it to its second or immediate cause—the infection, the blood-poisoning, the imprudence, the hereditary taint, and there stop; or we may with greater reason look up to Him who is the true Lord of all, the second cause, and who worketh all things by the counsel of His own will; and if we do this last, we must see in an illness a visitation from God. He knows what we want. He sees, it may be, that in us which will never be corrected in the days of rude health and of high spirits; He sees the

insensibility to the seriousness of life, to the claims of others, to the true interests of the soul, to the unfashionable love of the Divine Redeemer; and an illness which gives time for prayer, for reflection, for resolution, is a school of discipline. An illness is to thousands of men one of the greatest blessings in life; and yet its significance may easily be missed, and then no such visitation may be vouchsafed again. Those who have never had bad health are, it has been truly said, objects of anxiety; those who have had it, and are none the better for it, are certainly objects of the very deepest concern and compassion. There was a story told, many years since, of a boat which was getting near the rapids above the Falls of Niagara. The boatmen managed to reach the shore; but, disregarding the advice which was earnestly given them, they put out again into the stream, with the object of crossing to the opposite bank. The current proved too strong for them, and those who had warned them of their danger looked on with a distress which was too great for words while the boat glided down with an ever-increasing speed to the edge of the falls. It is possible, brethren, in what concerns another life, to be in that condition to have ignored God's last word of warning, and to be hurrying onwards, under the stress of influences which we cannot any longer resist or control, towards the awful future. Great reason is there for prayer that, at the critical turning-point of our career, we may have, in our Lord's words, eyes to see and ears to hear, that we may distinguish God's visitations in life from what is ordinary in it; that we may remember that in every life, even in the most highly favoured, there is sooner or later a visitation which is the last. O Saviour of the world, who by Thy grace and precious blood hast redeemed us, save us and help us, O Lord !

Thursday before Easter.

At the beginning of thy supplications the commandment came forth, and I am come to show thee; for thou art greatly beloved: therefore understand the matter, and consider the vision.—*Daniel* ix. 23.

"O HOLY mountain of my God,
How do thy towers in ruin lie,
How art thou riven and strewn abroad,
Under the rude and wasteful sky!"
'Twas thus upon his fasting day
The "Man of Loves" was fain to pray,
His lattice open[1] toward his darling west,
Mourning the ruined home he still must love the best.

Oh! for a love like Daniel's now,
To wing to Heaven but one strong prayer
For God's new Israel, sunk as low,
Yet flourishing to sight as fair,
As Sion in her height of pride,
With queens for handmaids at her side,
With kings her nursing-fathers, thronèd high,
And compassed with the world's too tempting blazonry.

'Tis true, nor winter stays thy growth,
Nor torrid summer's sickly smile;
The flashing billows of the South
Break not upon so lone an isle,
But thou, rich vine, art grafted there,
The fruit of death or life to bear,
Yielding a surer witness every day,
To thine Almighty Author and His steadfast sway.

O grief to think that grapes of gall
Should cluster round thine healthiest shoot!

[1] Daniel vi. 10.

God's herald prove a heartless thrall,
Who, if he dared, would fain be mute!
E'en such is this bad world we see,
Which, self-condemned in owning Thee,
Yet dares not open farewell of Thee take,
For very pride, and her high-boasted Reason's sake.

What do we then? if far and wide
Men kneel to Christ, the pure and meek,
Yet rage with passion, swell with pride,
Have we not still our faith to seek?
Nay—but in steadfast humbleness
Kneel on to Him who loves to bless
The prayer that waits for Him, and trembling strive
To keep the lingering flame in thine own breast alive.

Dark frowned the future e'en on him,
The loving and belovèd Seer,
What time he saw, through shadows dim,
The boundary of the eternal year—
He only of the sons of men
Named to be heir of glory then;[1]
Else had it bruised too sore his tender heart
To see God's ransomed world in wrath and flame depart.

Then look no more: or closer watch
Thy course in earth's bewildering ways,
For every glimpse thine eye can catch
Of what shall be in those dread days:
So when the Archangel's word is spoken,
And Death's deep trance for ever broken,
In mercy thou may'st feel the heavenly hand,
And in thy lot unharmed before thy Saviour stand.[2]

[1] Daniel xii. 13. See Bp. Ken's Sermon on the character of Daniel.

[2] Thou shalt rest, and stand in thy lot at the end of the days.—*Daniel* xii. 13.

HABITUAL PRAYER.

Habitual prayer constantly confers decision on the wavering, energy on the listless, calmness on the excitable, and disinterestedness on the selfish. It braces the moral nature by transporting it into a clear invigorating unearthly atmosphere; it builds up the moral life, insensibly but surely remedying its deficiencies, and strengthening its weak points, till there emerges a comparatively symmetrical and consistent whole, the excellence of which all must admit, though its secret is known only to those who know it by experience. Akin to the moral are the social effects of prayer. Prayer makes men, as members of society, different in their whole bearing from those who do not pray. It gilds social intercourse and conduct with a tenderness, an unobtrusiveness, a sincerity, a frankness, an evenness of temper, a cheerfulness, a collectiveness, a constant consideration for others, united to a simple loyalty to truth and duty, which leavens and strengthens society. Nay, it is not too much to say that prayer has even physical results. The countenance of a Fra Angelico reflects his spirit no less than does his art; the bright eye, the pure elevated expression, speak for themselves. It was said of one who has died within the present generation (Rev. J. Keble) that in his latter years his face was like that of an illuminated clock; the colour and gilding had long faded away from the hands and figures, but the ravages of time were more than compensated for by the light which shone from within. That was what might have been expected in an aged man of great piety; to have lived in spirit on Mount Tabor during the years of a long life is to have caught in its closing hours some rays of the glory of the Transfiguration.

Good Friday.

He is despised and rejected of men.—*Isaiah* liii. 3.

Is it not strange, the darkest hour
That ever dawned on sinful earth
Should touch the heart with softer power
For comfort than an angel's mirth?
That to the Cross the mourner's eye should turn
Sooner than where the stars of Christmas burn?

Sooner than where the Easter sun
Shines glorious on yon open grave,
And to and fro the tidings run,
"Who died to heal, is risen to save?"
Sooner than where upon the Saviour's friends
The very Comforter in light and love descends?

Yet so it is: for duly there
The bitter herbs of earth are set,
Till tempered by the Saviour's prayer,
And with the Saviour's life-blood wet,
They turn to sweetness, and drop holy balm,
Soft as imprisoned martyr's death-bed calm.

All turn to sweet—but most of all
That bitterest to the lip of pride,
When hopes presumptuous fade and fall,
Or Friendship scorns us, duly tried,
Or Love, the flower that closes up for fear
When rude and selfish spirits breathe too near.

Then like a long-forgotten strain
Comes sweeping o'er the heart forlorn
What sunshine hours had taught in vain
Of Jesus suffering shame and scorn,

As in all lowly hearts he suffers still,
While we triumphant ride and have the world at will.

His piercèd hands in vain would hide
His face from rude reproachful gaze,
His ears are open to abide
The wildest storm the tongue can raise,
He who, with one rough word,[1] some early day,
Their idol world and them shall sweep for aye away.

But we by Fancy may assuage
The festering sore by Fancy made,
Down in some lonely hermitage
Like wounded pilgrims safely laid,
Where gentlest breezes whisper souls distressed,
That Love yet lives, and Patience shall find rest.

O shame beyond the bitterest thought
That evil spirit ever framed,
That sinners know what Jesus wrought,
Yet feel their haughty hearts untamed—
That souls in refuge, holding by the Cross,
Should wince and fret at this world's little loss!

Lord of my heart, by Thy last cry,
Let not Thy blood on earth be spent—
Lo, at Thy feet I fainting lie,
Mine eyes upon Thy wounds are bent,
Upon Thy streaming wounds my weary eyes
Wait like the parchèd earth on April skies.

Wash me, and dry these bitter tears,
O let my heart no further roam,
'Tis Thine by vows, and hopes, and fears,
Long since—O call Thy wanderer home,
To that dear home, safe in Thy wounded side,
Where only broken hearts their sin and shame may hide.

[1] Wisdom of Solomon xii. 9.

The Collect.

ALMIGHTY GOD, we beseech thee graciously to behold this thy family, for which our Lord Jesus Christ was contented to be betrayed, and given up into the hands of wicked men, and to suffer death upon the cross, who now liveth and reigneth with thee and the Holy Ghost, ever one God, world without end. *Amen.*

CHRISTIAN EXPECTATION.

It may indeed be asked whether the true satisfactions of religion are not present satisfactions? whether virtue is not its own reward? whether God is not the present possession of the Christian soul? whether the things that eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, but which God has prepared for them that love Him, are not things to be enjoyed on earth by the spirit of man? whether, in fine, the expectation of something yet to come is not the note of preparatory and imperfect dispensations, and unworthy of the gift which was made to man by the Divine Incarnation?

To this it must be replied that Christianity, as a matter of fact, does not profess in this life to satisfy all the aspirations of man. It does a great deal for him, yet it leaves something still to be done; it holds something in reserve; and that for man's own sake, and with a view to his best interests.

. . . . . .

Thus the satisfaction which Christianity affords to the human soul is at once present and future; present in part but future in its completeness: we have eternal life, yet we expect it; we possess God, yet we look forward to seeing Him as He is; we are in heaven in one sense, while in another we have yet to win it. The treasure of

the Gospel is ours, but only in part; enough is left to look forward to, to feed the high grace of hope, to exert upon the nature which God the Creator has given us that strong attraction, that indispensable stimulus which belongs to anticipation of the future.

Easter Eve.

As for thee also, by the blood of thy covenant I have sent forth thy prisoners out of the pit wherein is no water.—*Zechariah* ix. 11.

At length the worst is o'er, and Thou art laid
Deep in Thy darksome bed;
All still and cold beneath yon dreary stone
Thy sacred form is gone;
Around those lips where power and mercy hung,
The dews of death have clung;
The dull earth o'er Thee, and Thy foes around,
Thou sleep'st a silent corse, in funeral fetters wound.

Sleep'st Thou indeed? or is Thy spirit fled,
At large among the dead?
Whether in Eden bowers Thy welcome voice
Wake Abraham to rejoice,
Or in some drearier scene Thine eye controls
The thronging band of souls;
That, as Thy blood won earth, Thine agony
Might set the shadowy realm from sin and sorrow free.

Where'er Thou roamest, one happy soul, we know,
Seen at Thy side in woe,[1]
Waits on Thy triumph—e'en as all the blest
With him and Thee shall rest.

[1] St. Luke xxiii. 43.

Each on his cross, by Thee we hang a while,
Watching Thy patient smile,
Till we have learned to say, "'Tis justly done;
Only in glory, Lord, Thy sinful servant own."

Soon wilt Thou take us to Thy tranquil bower
To rest one little hour,
Till Thine elect are numbered, and the grave
Call Thee to come and save:
Then on Thy bosom borne shall we descend,
Again with earth to blend,
Earth all refined with bright supernal fires,
Tinctured with holy blood, and winged with pure desires.

Meanwhile with every son and saint of Thine
Along the glorious line,
Sitting by turns beneath Thy sacred feet,
We'll hold communion sweet,
Know them by look and voice, and thank them all
For helping us in thrall,
For words of hope, and bright examples given
To show through moonless skies that there is light in Heaven.

O come that day, when in this restless heart
Earth shall resign her part,
When in the grave with Thee my limbs shall rest,
My soul with Thee be blest!
But stay, presumptuous—Christ with thee abides
In the rock's dreary sides:
He from the stone will wring celestial dew
If but the prisoner's heart be faithful found and true.

When tears are spent, and thou art left alone
With ghosts of blessings gone,

Think thou art taken from the cross, and laid
In Jesus' burial shade;
Take Moses' rod, the rod of prayer, and call
Out of the rocky wall
The fount of holy blood; and lift on high
Thy grovelling soul that feels so desolate and dry.

Prisoner of Hope thou art [1]—look up and sing
In hope of promised spring.
As in the pit his father's darling lay,[2]
Beside the desert way,
And knew not how, but knew his God would save
E'en from that living grave,
So, buried with our Lord, we'll close our eyes
To the decaying world, till Angels bid us rise.

The Collect.

GRANT, O Lord, that as we are baptized into the death of thy blessed Son, our Saviour Jesus Christ, so by continual mortifying our corrupt affections we may be buried with him; and that through the grave, and gate of death, we may pass to our joyful resurrection; for his merits, who died, and was buried, and rose again for us, thy Son Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

MORAL FRUITFULNESS OF FAITH IN CHRIST'S GODHEAD.

When Greek thought was keenest, and Greek art most triumphantly creative, and Greek political life so organised as to favour in a degree elsewhere unknown among men the play of man's highest natural energies, Greek society was penetrated through and through by an

[1] Turn you to the stronghold, ye prisoners of hope.—*Zechariah* ix. 12.

[2] They took him, and cast him into a pit: and the pit was empty, there was no water in it.—*Genesis* xxxvii. 24.

invisible enemy, more fatal in its ravages to thought, to art, to freedom, than the sword of any Persian or Macedonian foe. And already in the age of the early Cæsars, Rome carried in her bosom the secret of her impending decline and fall in the coming centuries. Christian moralists detected and exposed it in terms which are fully borne out by writers devoted to the old Pagan society. The life-blood of a race may be drained away less nobly than on the battlefield. Every capacity for high and generous exertion, or for the cheerful endurance of suffering at the bidding of duty, all the stock of moral force on which a country can rely in its hour of trial, may be sapped, destroyed, annihilated by a domestic traitor. So it fared with imperial Rome. The fate of the great empire was not really decided on the Rhine or on the Danube. Before the barbarians had as yet begun to muster their savage hordes along the frontiers on ancient civilisation, their work had well nigh been completed, their victory had been won, in the cities, the palaces, nay, in the very temples of the empire. And upon what resources could the old Pagan society fall back in its alarm at and struggle with this formidable foe? It could not depend upon the State. The Emperor was the State by impersonation: and not infrequently it happened that the Emperor was the public friend and patron of the State's worst enemy. Nor could any reliance be placed upon philosophy. Doubtless philosophy meant well in some of its phases, in some of its representatives. But philosophy is much too feeble a thing to enter the lists successfully with animal passion; and, as a matter of fact, philosophy has more than once been compelled or cajoled into placing her intellectual weapons at the disposal of the sensualist. Nor did religion herself, in her Pagan guise, supply the needed element of re-

sistance and cure. Her mysteries were the sanction, her temples the scene, her priests the ministers of the grossest debaucheries; and the misery of a degraded society might have seemed to be complete when the institutions which were designed to shed some rays of light and love from a higher sphere upon the woes and brutalities of this lower world did but consecrate and augment the thick moral darkness which made of earth a very hell.

Now, that Jesus Christ has breasted this evil, is a matter of historical fact. His victory is chronicled, if not in the actual practice, yet in the constitutional standard of modern society. Certainly the evil in question has not been fairly driven beyond the frontiers of Christendom; the tone of our social intercourse, the sympathies of our literature, the proceedings of our law-courts, would remind us from time to time "that the Canaanite is yet in the land." But if he is not yet expelled from our borders, at least he is forced to skulk away from the face of a society which still names the Name of Jesus Christ. The most advanced scepticism among us at the present day does not venture with impunity to advocate habits which were treated as matters of course by the friends of Plato: even the license of our sensuous poetry does not screen such advocacy from earnest and general indignation. This is because, far beyond the circle of His true worshippers, Jesus Christ has created in modern society a public opinion, sternly determined to discountenance and condemn moral mischief, which yet it may be wholly unable to prevent. This public opinion is sometimes tempted to disown its real parentage and its undoubted obligations. Instead of rejoicing to confess itself the pupil of Christ, it imagines schemes of independent morality framed altogether by human thinkers, which may relieve

it of its sense of indebtedness to our Lord. But, as a matter of fact, all that is thus true and wholesome in the national mind is an intellectual radiation from that actual mass of living purity wherewith the Healer of men has beautified the lives of millions of Christians.

Easter Day.

And as they were afraid, and bowed down their faces to the earth, they said unto them, Why seek ye the living among the dead? He is not here, but is risen.—*St. Luke* xxiv. 5, 6.

O DAY of days! shall hearts set free
No "minstrel rapture" find for thee?
Thou art the Sun of other days,
They shine by giving back thy rays.

Enthronèd in thy sovereign sphere
Thou sheddest thy light on all the year:
Sundays by thee more glorious break,
An Easter Day in every week:

And week-days, following in their train,
The fulness of thy blessing gain,
Till all, both resting and employ,
Be one Lord's Day of holy joy.

Then wake, my soul, to high desires,
And earlier light thine altar-fires:
The world some hours is on her way,
Nor thinks on thee, thou blessèd day:

Or, if she think, it is in scorn:
The vernal light of Easter morn
To her dark gaze no brighter seems
Than Reason's or the Law's pale beams.

"Where is your Lord?" she scornful asks:
"Where is His hire? we know His tasks;
Sons of a King ye boast to be,
Let us your crowns and treasures see."

We in the words of Truth reply
(An angel brought them from the sky),
"Our crown, our treasure, is not here,
'Tis stored above the highest sphere:

"Methinks your wisdom guides amiss,
To seek on earth a Christian's bliss;
We watch not now the lifeless stone;
Our only Lord is risen and gone."

Yet e'en the lifeless stone is dear
For thoughts of Him who late lay here;
And the base world, now Christ hath died,
Ennobled is and glorified.

No more a charnel-house, to fence
The relics of lost innocence,
A vault of ruin and decay;—
The imprisoning stone is rolled away:

'Tis now a cell, where angels use
To come and go with heavenly news,
And in the ears of mourners say,
"Come, see the place where Jesus lay!"

'Tis now a fane, where Love can find
Christ everywhere embalmed and shrined;
Aye gathering up memorials sweet,
Where'er she sets her duteous feet.

O joy to Mary first allowed,
When roused from weeping o'er His shroud,

By His own calm, soul-soothing tone,
Breathing her name, as still His own!

Joy to the faithful Three renewed,
As their glad errand they pursued!
Happy who so Christ's word convey,
That He may meet them on their way!

So is it still: to holy tears,
In lonely hours, Christ risen appears:
In social hours, who Christ would see,
Must turn all tasks to Charity.

The Collect.

Almighty God, who through thine only-begotten Son Jesus Christ hast overcome death, and opened unto us the gate of everlasting life; We humbly beseech thee, that, as by thy special grace preventing us thou dost put into our minds good desires, so by thy continual help we may bring the same to good effect; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who liveth and reigneth with thee and the Holy Ghost, ever one God, world without end. *Amen.*

EASTER JOY.

For us, in a distant age, this fact that Christ rose from death is not less full of precious hope and joy than for our first forefathers in the Faith. In our day there has been another resurrection, a resurrection of doubt. And the gloomy uncertainties about the future which were dissipated by Christ, again threaten to overshadow sections of Christendom with little less than a pagan darkness. But while negative speculation is ever active, the broad facts of human life remain what they always have been. Death claims, year by year, month by month, its victims

from every household; science and thought, it may be reluctantly, bow their heads at the presence of death. They confess his power; they can suggest nothing to relieve the gloom which surrounds his empire. Only beside the empty tomb of Jesus Christ can this generation, or those who will succeed us, recover any true hope in the destinies of man; for "Christ is risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept. For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection from the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive."

It is this invigorating and joyous hope which Easter bestows on us. Unbelief once wrote at the entrance of a cemetery the word *Fuerunt*, "They have been." Faith always writes over the gate of a churchyard, "I am the Resurrection and the Life." To unbelief the dead are but memories; memories of beings who have ceased to be. To faith the dead are living, working, praying friends, whom nothing but the dulness of sense hides from sight. They are not yet what they will be; but they are there—

"The dead! They have become
Like guardian angels to us;
And distant heaven, like home,
Through them begins to woo us:
Love, that was earthly, wings
Its flight to holier places;
The dead are sacred things
That multiply our graces."

The Resurrection of Christ has done its work: it has quickened our perceptions of the unseen and the future. The hope of meeting those whom we have loved and lost; of renewing, in a brighter atmosphere, all that was worth keeping in the intercourse of earthly life; above

all, the hope of seeing and being welcomed by Him, their Lord and ours, who in His human body is set at God's right hand in heavenly places; this hope, glorious and inspiring, springs directly from Easter Day. Truly, we may exclaim with the Apostle, that God "hath begotten us again unto a lively hope through the Resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead," and with the Psalmist, that "this is the day which the Lord hath made: let us rejoice and be glad in it."

Yes; Easter Day is not a day for protracted argument: it is a day for Christian joy. Of this joy the outward signs are around us. Nature and art are here; the flowers from the garden and the music of the choir, each contributes its best to the honour of our risen Lord. May He grant that outward tokens of joy may be for us all in keeping with an inward experience. The reality of a man's Easter joy is a fair test of his Christian sincerity. If we have at all felt sympathy with Christ in His sufferings, we must rejoice at the triumph which has ended them. If we do account our Christian faith as indeed the pearl of great price, we must rejoice at the event, which more than any other, demonstrates its value. If we have staked our all upon the eternal future, our hearts must indeed bound with delight at the memory of that majestic fact which shows that we have not wasted our efforts on an unsubstantial fancy. May Christ our Lord vouchsafe to deepen in us this joy in His Blessed Resurrection; to give it more and more practical expression in our lives; and to satisfy it perfectly hereafter in that world, where, through His death and resurrection, we shall be like Him, and shall see Him as He is.

Monday in Easter Week.

Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons: but in every nation he that feareth Him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with Him.—*Acts* x. 34, 35.

Go up and watch the new-born rill
Just trickling from its mossy bed,
Streaking the heath-clad hill
With a bright emerald thread.

Canst thou her bold career foretell,
What rocks she shall o'erleap or rend,
How far in Ocean's swell
Her freshening billows send?

Perchance that little brook shall flow
The bulwark of some mighty realm,
Bear navies to and fro
With monarchs at their helm.

Or canst thou guess how far away
Some sister nymph, beside her urn
Reclining night and day,
'Mid reeds and mountain fern,

Nurses her store, with thine to blend
When many a moor and glen are past,
Then in the wide sea end
Their spotless lives at last?

E'en so, the course of prayer who knows?
It springs in silence where it will,
Springs out of sight, and flows
At first a lonely rill:

But streams shall meet it by and by
From thousand sympathetic hearts,
Together swelling high
Their chant of many parts.

Unheard by all but angel ears
The good Cornelius knelt alone,
Nor dreamed his prayers and tears
Would help a world undone.

The while upon his terraced roof
The loved Apostle to his Lord,
In silent thought aloof,
For heavenly vision soared.

Far o'er the glowing western main
His wistful brow was upward raised,
Where, like an angel's train,
The burnished water blazed.

The saint beside the ocean prayed,
The soldier in his chosen bower,
Where all his eye surveyed
Seemed sacred in that hour.

To each unknown his brother's prayer,
Yet brethren true in dearest love
Were they—and now they share
Fraternal joys above.

There daily through Christ's open gate
They see the Gentile spirits press,
Brightening their high estate
With dearer happiness.

What civic wreath for comrades saved
Shone ever with such deathless gleam,
Or when did perils braved
So sweet to veterans seem?

*** *The Collect is the same as for the previous day.*

WORSHIP.

Worship places us face to face with the greatness of the Creator. It puts us, as we contemplate Him, out of heart with ourselves, with our own rights, with our own pretensions; we have, it may be, to confess to Him, "Other gods beside Thee have had dominion over us." But the very first effort at true worship implies that God is resuming, that He has resumed, His true place in our thoughts; that He is no longer jostled out of our mental life by a hundred puny or worthless rivals belonging to the world of sense. We cannot be practically forgetting what it is to have a Creator when we sincerely obey the invitation to "come and worship and fall down before Him." Worship, too, obliges us to think what we are ourselves. It is one thing to hold the immortality of man as an abstract tenet; it is another to be looking forward with a steady, practical aim to a life to come. When we worship we pass inside the veil of sense, we cross the threshold of the unseen world, we enter upon an exercise which is itself a preparation for the life which lies before us after this is over. We bow down before the majesty of God, but we also understand something of the meaning of our own existence. Who are we that we should thus venture into His presence-chamber, if we are indeed only the creatures of a day, only beings of flesh and blood, whose life is bounded by an earthly horizon? . . . Worship, depend upon it, is the great preparation

for another life—a waste of time, no doubt, if the soul dies with the perishing body, if decay be succeeded by no resurrection, but a use of time, than which none can be more sensible, more legitimate, if there be a most certain hereafter, and if, while "the things that are seen are temporal, the things that are not seen are eternal."

Tuesday in Easter Week.

And they departed quickly from the sepulchre with fear and great joy; and did run to bring His disciples word.—*St. Matthew* xxviii. 8.

TO THE SNOWDROP.

THOU first-born of the year's delight,
Pride of the dewy glade,
In vernal green and virgin white,
Thy vestal robes, arrayed:

'Tis not because thy drooping form
Sinks graceful on its nest,
When chilly shades from gathering storm
Affright thy tender breast;

Nor for yon river islet wild
Beneath the willow spray,
Where, like the ringlets of a child,
Thou weav'st thy circle gay;

'Tis not for these I love thee dear—
Thy shy averted smiles
To Fancy bode a joyous year,
One of Life's fairy isles.

They twinkle to the wintry moon,
And cheer th' ungenial day,

And tell us, all will glisten soon
As green and bright as they.

Is there a heart, that loves the spring,
Their witness can refuse?
Yet mortals doubt, when angels bring
From Heaven their Easter news,

When only maids and matrons speak
Of Christ's forsaken bed,
And voices, that forbid to seek
The living 'mid the dead,

And when they say, "Turn, wandering heart,
Thy Lord is risen indeed,
Let Pleasure go, put care apart,
And to His presence speed;"

We smile in scorn: and yet we know
They early sought the tomb,
Their hearts, that now so freshly glow,
Lost in desponding gloom.

They who have sought, nor hope to find,
Wear not so bright a glance:
They, who have won their earthly mind,
Less reverently advance.

But where, in gentle spirits, fear
And joy so duly meet,
These sure have seen the angels near,
And kissed the Saviour's feet.

Nor let the Pastor's thankful eye
Their faltering tale disdain,
As on their lowly couch they lie,
Prisoners of want and pain.

O guide us, when our faithless hearts
From Thee would start aloof,
Where Patience her sweet skill imparts
Beneath some cottage roof:

Revive our dying fires, to burn
High as her anthems soar,
And of our scholars let us learn
Our own forgotten lore.

*** *The Collect is the same as for the previous day.*

SPIRITUAL DEATH.

Reflect on the reality of spiritual death, linked as it often is in one and the same man, as if by a ghastly ligament, to the highest animal and mental life. The body is in the full flush of its powers, the mind day by day plays lightly over the surface, or grapples earnestly with the substance of a thousand topics. But the spiritual self is, to all intents and purposes, dead; and neither boisterous animal spirits nor intellectual fire can galvanise it into life. The spiritual senses do not act: the spiritual world is as if it did not exist. The eye of that soul is closed; it sees in spiritual truth only diseased imaginations or needless scruples. Its ears are closed: Christ and His Apostles are to it only like any other talker in the Babel of human tongues. Its mouth is closed; it never speaks to God in prayer, or to man in faith and love. Its hands and feet tightly bandaged in the grave-clothes of selfish habit, it cannot rise; it cannot engage in works of benevolence and mercy for the love of God; it must lie on, in the darkness and putrefaction of its spiritual tomb; while death, as the Psalmist says, gnaweth upon it. And a great stone has been rolled to the door of its sepulchre; the dead-weight of corrupt and irreligious

opinion which bars out from it the light and air of heaven, and makes its prison-house of death secure. How is such a spell and encumbrance of death to be thrown off, if no help, no motive quickening power come from on high? Even if angels should roll away the stone, how can life itself be restored, unless He who is its Lord and Giver shall flash into this dead spirit His own quickening power, and bid it see, and hear, and walk, and work, and feel, and rejoice in its returning life, and go forth to brace its strength, and assert its liberty?

First Sunday after Easter.

Seemeth it but a small thing unto you, that the God of Israel hath separated you from the congregation of Israel, to bring you near to Himself?—*Numbers* xvi. 9.

FIRST Father of the holy seed,
If yet, invoked in hour of need,
Thou count me for Thine own,
Not quite an outcast if I prove
(Thou joyest in miracles of love),
Hear, from Thy mercy-throne!

Upon Thine altar's horn of gold
Help me to lay my trembling hold,
Though stained with Christian gore;—
The blood of souls by Thee redeemed,
But, while I roved or idly dreamed,
Lost to be found no more.

For oft, when summer leaves were bright,
And every flower was bathed in light,
In sunshine moments past,
My wilful heart would burst away
From where the holy shadow lay,
Where Heaven my lot had cast.

I thought it scorn with Thee to dwell,
A Hermit in a silent cell,
While, gaily sweeping by,
Wild fancy blew his bugle strain,
And marshalled all his gallant train
In the world's wondering eye.

I would have joined him—but as oft
Thy whispered warnings, kind and soft,
My better soul confessed.
"My servant, let the world alone—
Safe on the steps of Jesus' throne
Be tranquil and be blest.

"Seems it to thee a niggard hand
That nearest Heaven has bade thee stand,
The ark to touch and bear,
With incense of pure heart's desire
To heap the censer's sacred fire,
The snow-white Ephod wear?"

Why should we crave the worldling's wreath,
On whom the Saviour deigned to breathe,
To whom His keys were given,
Who lead the choir where angels meet,
With angels' food our brethren greet,
And pour the drink of Heaven?

When sorrow all our heart would ask,
We need not shun our daily task,
And hide ourselves for calm;
The herbs we seek to heal our woe
Familiar by our pathway grow,
Our common air is balm.

Around each pure domestic shrine
Bright flowers of Eden bloom and twine,
Our hearths are altars all ;
The prayers of hungry souls and poor,
Like armèd angels at the door,
Our unseen foes appal.

Alms all around and hymns within—
What evil eye can entrance win
Where guards like these abound ?
If chance some heedless heart should roam,
Sure, thought of these will lure it home
Ere lost in Folly's round.

O joys, that sweetest in decay,
Fall not, like withered leaves, away,
But with the silent breath
Of violets drooping one by one,
Soon as the fragrant task is done,
Are wafted high in death !

The Collect.

ALMIGHTY FATHER, who hast given thine only Son to die for our sins, and to rise again for our justification ; Grant us so to put away the leaven of malice and wickedness, that we may always serve thee in pureness of living and truth ; through the merits of the same thy Son Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

THE DUTY AND CONDUCT OF CHRISTIANS.

On what terms, my brethren, ought a Christian to consort with those who openly deny the truth of religion, or who live in flagrant violation of its precepts ? This is one of those practical questions which meet serious

men in their daily lives, and there are two dangers to guard against. On the one hand, we must try to keep clear of Pharisaism—that rank weed which so soon springs up in the souls of those who are trying to serve God. The interval between "God be merciful to me a sinner," and "God, I thank thee that I am not as other men are," is not, practically speaking, a very wide interval, and Pharisaism shows itself by social excommunications —by narrow and ungenerous prejudices—by a tacit assumption of moral superiority, which is only too common among people who are, generally, trying to lead, by God's grace, Christian lives. On the other hand, we have to guard against an appearance or affectation of indifference to the known will of God, whether in matters of faith or in conduct. To no Christian can it be other than the most solemn of all considerations, whether those around are living conformably to the Divine Will so far as they know and can. No responsibility can well be greater than that of encouraging others in disobedience to the known will of God. And when this is the plain result of social intercourse, such intercourse becomes at once sinful. St. Paul asked the Corinthians with respect to the effect of intercourse on conduct, "What fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? And what communion hath light with darkness? And what concord hath Christ with Belial? What part hath he that believeth with an infidel?" And St. John, writing his second epistle to the elect lady and her children, about the effect of social intercourse on faith, says, "He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son. If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed; for he that biddeth him God speed is partaker of his evil deeds." These passages, brethren,

are not very popular in the present day, but there they are, in the New Testament. And the question is, How are we to obey them without falling into the sin of Pharisaism? The answer seems to be supplied by our Lord's own example at the feast given by Matthew the publican. What was His motive in being there? He tells us Himself. He was there simply as a physician to heal the sick. He was there as a prophet to call sinners to repentance. He did not go only because He was asked, out of easy good humour, and prepared to say nothing that would be unacceptable to the publicans and sinners. He went because He desired to do them good—because He knew that He could do it; and this, allowing for the necessary variations in the situation, should be the Christian's rule. If a Christian sees no opportunity of doing anything for the cause of his Lord, he had better keep away from the feast of Matthew. If the society which invites his presence is brilliant and sceptical, and he knows that he cannot hope even to hold his own with the minds which shape and rule its intellectual tendencies, then he is better away. If it is morally vicious, and he is conscious of weakness of will or secret sympathy with evil, and cannot hope to stem the impetuous social current, then, again, he is better away. It is not charity—it is rashness—it is folly—if, indeed, it be not rather a treacherous indifference to the truth which has come from heaven—to voluntarily expose our own souls to risks which are palpable and overwhelming, when no good can be done for the souls of others. But if he can hope, ever so little, that some good may be done, then no social prejudices—then no class opinion—ought to hold him back. The frontier of Christian intercourse cannot be fixed by our social conventionalisms. Society mutters, "Take care of your character for respectability." A

Christian thinks of the presence of Christ at the feast of Matthew. A Christian knows that the difference between men is often much less than it seems to be,—that, when the difference of opportunities is taken into account, it is often, where it seems to be greatest, very insignificant indeed. Who is the Christian, that he should think meanly of such and such a sceptic—of such a profligate, as if, but for God's grace, he would have been any better himself? Nay, may he not have even something to learn from the children of undisciplined nature—natural virtues, generous impulses, stray bits of the will of God which have escaped him, or which he has forgotten? Nature without grace may be—she is—in ruins; but her ruins are often enough beautiful and suggestive.

Great need, indeed, is there of the help of God for those Christians who, in this matter, would really follow in the steps of Christ. We can pretend, my brethren, to no sinless nature; we cannot ensure the loyalty either of our understandings or of our wills to God's truth. But His grace is sufficient for us: His strength is made perfect in our weakness, which admits its necessity. The presence of Jesus at the feast of Levi reminds us that all intercourse between one human being and another is solemn, —only less solemn than the intercourse of your soul with the everlasting God. Beneath the fixed social forms—beneath the wonted trivialities—beneath the measured expressions of sympathy and disagreement which govern our social intercourse, there are currents of thought and feeling flowing from soul to soul, for good or for ill, moulding characters this way or that, for an endless future. Nobody who thinks what social intercourse is can doubt this. No one who keeps this in his mind can deny its importance in the view of eternity. Let us endeavour, when we are thrown with others, be they who they may,

to think of our Lord Jesus Christ, present, in His majesty and His love, at the feast of Levi, and pray Him for His gracious and ready help, that we, too, sinners though we be, may speak a word in season to him that is weary, and may, in this and all else, so pass through things temporal that we finally lose not the things eternal.

Second Sunday after Easter.

He hath said, which heard the words of God, and knew the knowledge of the Most High, which saw the vision of the Almighty, falling into a trance, but having his eyes open: I shall see Him, but not now: I shall behold Him, but not nigh: there shall come a Star out of Jacob, and a Sceptre shall rise out of Israel, and shall smite the corners of Moab, and destroy all the children of Sheth.—*Numbers* xxiv. 16, 17.

O FOR a sculptor's hand,
That thou might'st take thy stand,
Thy wild hair floating on the eastern breeze,
Thy tranced yet open gaze
Fixed on the desert haze,
As one who deep in heaven some airy pageant sees.

In outline dim and vast
Their fearful shadows cast
The giant forms of empires on their way
To ruin: one by one
They tower and they are gone,
Yet in the Prophet's soul the dreams of avarice stay.

No sun or star so bright
In all the world of light
That they should draw to Heaven his downward eye:
He hears th' Almighty's word,
He sees the angel's sword,
Yet low upon the earth his heart and treasure lie.

Lo! from yon argent field,
To him and us revealed,
One gentle Star glides down, on earth to dwell.
Chained as they are below
Our eyes may see it glow,
And as it mounts again, may track its brightness well.

To him it glared afar,
A token of wild war,
The banner of his Lord's victorious wrath:
But close to us it gleams,
Its soothing lustre streams
Around our home's green walls, and on our churchway path.

We in the tents abide
Which he at distance eyed
Like goodly cedars by the waters spread,
While seven red altar-fires
Rose up in wavy spires,
Where on the mount he watched his sorceries dark and dread.

He watched till morning's ray
On lake and meadow lay,
And willow-shaded streams, that silent sweep
Around the bannered lines,
Where by their several signs
The desert-wearied tribes in sight of Canaan sleep.

He watched till knowledge came
Upon his soul like flame,
Not of those magic fires at random caught:
But true prophetic light
Flashed o'er him, high and bright,
Flashed once, and died away, and left his darkened thought.

And can he choose but fear,
Who feels his God so near,
That when he fain would curse, his powerless tongue
In blessing only moves?—
Alas! the world he loves
Too close around his heart her tangling veil hath flung.

Sceptre and Star divine,
Who in Thine inmost shrine
Hast made us worshippers, O claim Thine own;
More than Thy seers we know—
O teach our love to grow
Up to Thy heavenly light, and reap what Thou hast sown.

The Collect.

ALMIGHTY GOD, who hast given thine only Son to be unto us both a sacrifice for sin, and also an ensample of godly life; Give us grace that we may always most thankfully receive that his inestimable benefit, and also daily endeavour ourselves to follow the blessed steps of his most holy life; through the same Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

REVERENCE.

The great have always been reverent; and for the reason that they have looked up to and shared in a greatness higher than their own. But to aspire to greatness you must sincerely own it; to recognise nothing as really great is to aim at nothing, to achieve nothing. Nothing, let me repeat, is more fatal to a young man's prospects of true greatness in life than that cynical estimate of everything and everybody which destroys all his moral enthusiasms, and condemns him prematurely to a self-deceiving pettiness. And what is true of man

is true of a society. The class, the race, the nation which has no ideals to admire, no institutions to revere, is doomed to narrowness, vulgarity, ruin. A great many clever epigrams have been made about hero-worship; and the worship of unworthy heroes is, of course, sufficiently ridiculous. But almost any hero-worship is better than none. The really pitiable thing is to revere nothing.

Third Sunday after Easter.

A woman when she is in travail hath sorrow, because her hour is come; but as soon as she is delivered of the child, she remembereth no more the anguish, for joy that a man is born into the world.—*St. John* xvi. 21.

WELL may I guess and feel
Why Autumn should be sad;
But vernal airs should sorrow heal,
Spring should be gay and glad:
Yet as along this violet bank I rove,
The languid sweetness seems to choke my breath,
I sit me down beside the hazel grove,
And sigh, and half could wish my weariness were death.

Like a bright veering cloud
Grey blossoms twinkle there,
Warbles round a busy crowd
Of larks in purest air.
Shame on the heart that dreams of blessings gone,
Or wakes the spectral forms of woe and crime,
When nature sings of joy and hope alone,
Reading her cheerful lesson in her own sweet time.

Nor let the proud heart say,
In her self-torturing hour,
The travail-pangs must have their way,
The aching brow must lower.

To us long since the glorious Child is born,
Our throes should be forgot, or only seem
Like a sad vision told for joy at morn,
For joy that we have waked and found it but a dream.

Mysterious to all thought
A mother's prime of bliss,
When to her eager lips is brought
Her infant's thrilling kiss.
O never shall it set, the sacred light
Which dawns that moment on her tender gaze,
In the eternal distance blending bright
Her darling's hope and hers, for love and joy and praise.

No need for her to weep
Like Thracian wives of yore,
Save when in rapture still and deep
Her thankful heart runs o'er.
They mourned to trust their treasure on the main,
Sure of the storm, unknowing of their guide:
Welcome to her the peril and the pain,
For well she knows the home where they may safely hide.

She joys that one is born
Into a world forgiven,
Her Father's household to adorn,
And dwell with her in Heaven.
So have I seen, in Spring's bewitching hour,
When the glad Earth is offering all her best,
Some gentle maid bend o'er a cherished flower,
And wish it worthier on a Parent's heart to rest.

The Collect.

ALMIGHTY GOD, who shewest to them that be in error the light of thy truth, to the intent that they may return into the

way of righteousness; Grant unto all them that are admitted into the fellowship of Christ's Religion, that they may eschew those things that are contrary to their profession, and follow all such things as are agreeable to the same; through our Lord Jesus Christ. *Amen.*

OUR LORD'S SUSTAINING PRESENCE.

What a difference there is between a mere memory and a presence! At first, indeed, when we have just lost a relation or friend, memory, in its importunity and anguish, seems to be and to do all that a presence could do—perhaps even more. It gathers up the past and heaps it on the present; it crowds into the thoughts of a few minutes the incidents of a lifetime; it has about it an eagerness and a vividness which was wanting, while its object was still with us! But then memory decays. That it should do so seems impossible at first: we protest to ourselves and to the world that it will be as fresh as ever to the last day of our existence But memory is only an effort of the human mind, while a presence is independent of it. And the human mind has limited powers, which are easily exhausted; it cannot always continue on the strain. So a time comes when memory's first freshness passes. Then other thoughts and interests and occupations crowd in upon us, and claim their share of the little all we have to give; and thus that which seemed to be so fresh and imperishable is already becoming faded and indistinct. Think of some personal friend, or of any of the celebrated men whose names were on every one's lips, and who have died within the last few years. At first it seems as if you might predict with confidence that the world would go on thinking and talking of them for at least a generation. But already the sure and fatal action

of time upon a memory, however great and striking, is making itself felt. Even in our thoughts about them, the departed are passing into that land of shadows, where shadows soon die away into that indistinguishable haze and gloom beyond.

It is otherwise with a presence, whether we see it or not. We know that it is here. If our friend is in the next room, busily occupied, and unable to give us his time just now, still the knowledge that he is close at hand, and can be applied to if necessary, is itself a comfort to us. We can go to him if we like. His being here places us in a very different position from that which we should occupy if he had left us, and we could only think of him as having been with us heretofore, though really absent now. A presence is a fact, independent of our moods of mind: it is a fact whether we recognise it or not; and in our Lord's Presence there is a fulness of joy which means hope, work, power, eventual victory.

This is a factor in the life and work of the Church of Christ with which persons do not reckon who look at her only from the outside, and judge of her strength and prospects as they would judge of those of any human society. They say she will die out because this or that force which has undoubted weight in the affairs of men is for the time being telling heavily against her. If large sections of popular feeling or literature, or the public policy of some great country, or the influence of a new and enterprising philosophy, or the bias of a group of powerful minds, are against her, forthwith we hear the cry, "The mission of the Apostles is now coming to an end; the Church will fail." Do not be in too great a haste, my good friends, about this; you have yet to reckon with a force invisible, and perhaps, so far as you are concerned, unsuspected, but never more real and opera-

tive than at this moment; you have forgotten the Presence of Christ. He did not retreat to Heaven when His first Apostles died; He promised to be with them to the end of the world; He spoke not merely to the eleven before Him, but to the vast multitude of successors, who defiled before His Eye down to the utmost limits of time. "Lo, I am with you all the days, even to the end of the world." With us by His Spirit; with us in the great Sacrament of His love; with us amid weaknesses, divisions, failures, disappointments: He is with us still. And it is His Presence alone which sustains His envoys, and gives to their work whatever it has had, or has, or has to have, of vigour and permanence.

With that work every Christian should associate himself. Every Christian should have in him, together with the love of Christ, something of the heart of an Apostle. Each of us should feel that his creed is, and must be, in the best sense of the word, aggressive: it must assail the forms of sin and error which prevail around it. Every worshipper of Christ must in his measure make disciples, and proclaim the undying commands and truths of Christ. And then with him too there shall tarry the Presence of the Most Holy as the sanction and warrant of his work.

Fourth Sunday after Easter.

Nevertheless I tell you the truth; it is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send Him unto you.—*St. John* xvi. 7.

My Saviour, can it ever be
That I should gain by losing Thee?
The watchful mother tarries nigh,
Though sleep have closed her infant's eye;

For should he wake, and find her gone,
She knows she could not bear his moan.
But I am weaker than a child,
And Thou art more than mother dear;
Without Thee Heaven were but a wild:
How can I live without Thee here!

"'Tis good for you that I should go,
You lingering yet awhile below;"—
'Tis Thine own gracious promise, Lord!
Thy saints have proved the faithful word,
When Heaven's bright boundless avenue
Far opened on their eager view,
And homeward to Thy Father's throne,
Still lessening, brightening on their sight,
Thy shadowy car went soaring on;
They tracked Thee up the abyss of light.

Thou bidd'st rejoice; they dare not mourn,
But to their home in gladness turn,
Their home and God's, that favoured place,
Where still He shines on Abraham's race,
In prayers and blessings there to wait
Like suppliants at their Monarch's gate,
Who went with bounty rare to aid
The splendours of His crowning day,
Keeps back awhile His largess, made
More welcome for that brief delay:

In doubt they wait, but not unblest;
They doubt not of their Master's rest,
Nor of the gracious will of Heaven—
Who gave His Son, sure all has given—
But in ecstatic awe they muse
What course the genial stream may choose,

And far and wide their fancies rove,
And to their height of wonder strain,
What secret miracle of love
Should make their Saviour's going gain.

The days of hope and prayer are past,
The day of comfort dawns at last,
The everlasting gates again
Roll back, and, lo! a royal train—
From the far depth of light once more
The floods of glory earthward pour:
They part like shower-drops in mid air,
But ne'er so soft fell noon-tide shower,
Nor evening rainbow gleamed so fair
To weary swains in parchèd bower.

Swiftly and straight each tongue of flame
Through cloud and breeze unwavering came,
And darted to its place of rest
On some meek brow of Jesus blest.
Nor fades it yet, that living gleam,
And still those lambent lightnings stream;
Where'er the Lord is, there are they;
In every heart that gives them room,
They light His altar every day,
Zeal to inflame, and vice consume.

Soft as the plumes of Jesus' Dove
They nurse the soul to heavenly love:
The struggling spark of good within,
Just smothered in the strife of sin,
They quicken to a timely glow,
The pure flame spreading high and low.

Said I, that prayer and hope were o'er?
Nay, blessed Spirit! but by Thee
The Church's prayer finds wings to soar,
The Church's hope finds eyes to see.

Then, fainting soul, arise and sing;
Mount, but be sober on the wing;
Mount up, for Heaven is won by prayer,
Be sober, for thou art not there;
Till Death the weary spirit free,
Thy God hath said, 'Tis good for thee
To walk by faith and not by sight:
Take it on trust a little while;
Soon shalt thou read the mystery right
In the full sunshine of His smile.

Or if thou yet more knowledge crave,
Ask thine own heart, that willing slave
To all that works thee woe or harm:
Shouldst thou not need some mighty charm
To win thee to thy Saviour's side,
Though He had deigned with thee to bide?
The Spirit must stir the darkling deep,
The Dove must settle on the Cross,
Else we should all sin on or sleep
With Christ in sight, turning our gain to loss.

The Collect.

O Almighty God, who alone canst order the unruly wills and affections of sinful men; Grant unto thy people, that they may love the thing which thou commandest, and desire that which thou dost promise; that so, among the sundry and manifold changes of the world, our hearts may surely there be fixed, where true joys are to be found; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

INTELLECTUAL APPETITE.

If knowledge is to do good, if the mind is to digest and to make knowledge its own, then there must be a desire or appetite for it. To pack a mind full of facts by a system of force or terror, where no interest whatever is felt as to the value of these facts or their relation to other facts, is only to make the learner achieve a certain transient feat in the province of memory. The facts are piled up like packages in a carrier's road-waggon, till the end of the journey; and when the lesson is said, they are taken out, and the mind is much as if it had never held them. And hence the first duty of a good teacher is not to inflict knowledge upon his pupils,—not to see that a certain quantity of knowledge has been accumulated within a given space of time, but to create an appetite for knowledge, or, as we may say, an "interest." Interest is to mental life just what appetite is to bodily; and the production, and encouragement, and guidance of interest is the great aim of a teacher, in any department of knowledge, who knows his work. Many clever and highly-educated men are quite unable to create it; that is to say, they are bad teachers. Until it is created, the mind is incapable of receiving to any good purpose. There is no sort of advantage in the near neighbourhood of knowledge which is not taken in,—very little in the reception of facts which are not understood or digested. A man who believes that he has nothing to learn, and a man who has no interest that would make him learn anything, are practically in much the same case. If a mind have no thirst or appetite for knowledge, it will be sent empty away from the choicest library, from the most gifted of teachers. Nothing can compensate for the absence of intellectual appetite.

And this is also true of the spiritual world. What food is to the body—what useful information or speculative thought is to the mind of man—that religious truth and the supernatural grace of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ are to man's highest nature,—to his undying personality, to his spirit. Religious truth and divine grace are the proper food of the human spirit; but, if they are to strengthen and refresh it, they too must be longed for, must be welcomed by appetite,—such appetite as is possible for spiritual essences to feel; such appetite as that of which the Psalmist sings: "Like as the hart desireth the water-brooks, so longeth my soul after Thee, O God." Religious truth forced upon a soul which has no desire for it does not illuminate; it only provokes a secret or avowed hostility. The grace of God—that is to say, no mere inoperative or barren favour, but the living, spiritual energy which flows forth from Him, and which unites the soul of man to Him,—even this does not quicken a responsible moral being in whom there is no active yearning for the gifts of heaven. It only benumbs and warps. In short, the soul must desire God as its true life, its true force, if God is to enlighten and strengthen it. Without this desire He will do nothing for it. It will be sent empty away.

Fifth Sunday after Easter.

ROGATION SUNDAY.

And the Lord was very angry with Aaron to have destroyed him; and I prayed for Aaron also the same time.—*Deut.* ix. 20.

Now is there solemn pause in earth and heaven;
The Conqueror now
His bonds hath riven,

And Angels wonder why He stays below:
Yet hath not man his lesson learned,
How endless love should be returned.

Deep is the silence as of summer noon,
When a soft shower
Will trickle soon,
A gracious rain, freshening the weary bower—
O sweetly then far off is heard
The clear note of some lonely bird.

So let Thy turtle-dove's sad call arise
In doubt and fear
Through darkening skies,
And pierce, O Lord, Thy justly-sealèd ear,
Where on the house-top,[1] all night long,
She trills her widowed, faltering song.

Teach her to know and love her hour of prayer,
And evermore,
As faith grows rare,
Unlock her heart, and offer all its store
In holier love and humbler vows,
As suits a lost returning spouse.

Not as at first,[2] but with intenser cry,
Upon the mount
She now must lie,
Till Thy dear love to blot the sad account
Of her rebellious race be won,
Pitying the mother in the son.

[1] Psalm cii. 7.

[2] I fell down before the Lord forty days and forty nights, as I fell down at the first.—*Deuteronomy* ix. 25.

But chiefly (for she knows Thee angered worst
By holiest things
Profaned and curst),
Chiefly for Aaron's seed she spreads her wings,
If but one leaf she may from Thee
Win of the reconciling tree.

For what shall heal, when holy water banes?
Or who may guide
O'er desert plains
Thy loved yet sinful people wandering wide,
If Aaron's hand unshrinking mould [1]
An idol form of earthly gold?

Therefore her tears are bitter, and as deep
Her boding sigh,
As, while men sleep,
Sad-hearted mothers heave, that wakeful lie,
To muse upon some darling child
Roaming in youth's uncertain wild.

Therefore on fearful dreams her inward sight
Is fain to dwell—
What lurid light
Shall the last darkness of the world dispel,
The Mediator in His wrath
Descending down the lightning's path.

Yet, yet awhile, offended Saviour, pause
In act to break [2]
Thine outraged laws;
O spare Thy rebels for Thine own dear sake;
Withdraw Thine hand, nor dash to earth
The covenant of our second birth.

[1] Exodus xxxii. 4. [2] Exodus xxxii. 19.

'Tis forfeit like the first—we own it all,
Yet for love's sake
Let it not fall;
But at Thy touch let veilèd hearts awake,
That nearest to Thine altar lie,
Yet least of holy things descry.

Teacher of teachers! Priest of priests! from Thee
The sweet strong prayer
Must rise, to free
First Levi, then all Israel, from the snare.
Thou art our Moses out of sight—
Speak for us, or we perish quite.

The Collect.

O Lord, from whom all good things do come; Grant to us thy humble servants, that by thy holy inspiration we may think those things that be good, and by thy merciful guiding may perform the same; through our Lord Jesus Christ. *Amen.*

OUR ASPIRATION TOWARDS THE GOOD.

Enervated by pleasure, or distracted by pain, absorbed in the pursuit of material objects, driven hither and thither by gusts of passion, slaves of the lust of the eyes or of the pride of life, men forget too easily why they are here at all, and what they have to do in order to fulfil the primal object of existence. When once a man has these fundamental truths well in view, the importance of prayer becomes immediately apparent. If man is here in order to further the will and to illustrate the glory of the Being who made him, what can be more natural, what more imperative, than constant reference to that Being, sometimes for help—oftener for pardon? If God is not merely the source but the end of man's exist-

ence, His "exceeding great reward," what can be more obvious than to reach upwards towards Him by an earnest voluntary effort here and now? And if prayer is man's most worthy occupation, it is also the highest employment of his practical understanding, as distinct from his feelings or his imagination. Observe, I say, distinctly, of his practical, and not of his speculative, understanding. The speculative faculty within us, as I entirely admit, may attain to high degrees of activity and excellence, and never feel the want of prayer. We may frame, we may investigate theories about the universe, theories about ourselves, which afford almost exhaustless occupation, but which do not oblige us to go out of ourselves. But with the practical understanding it is otherwise. The practical understanding having to determine the rule of right action—what man as man has to do, and what are his means of doing it, and how far he comes short, and under ordinary circumstances cannot but come short, of the high ideal before him,—the practical understanding is, I say, driven to look beyond and above man himself for his necessary supply of force. And this, the instinct of man's common sense, is borne out by a deeper instinct embedded in the very depths of his being and inseparable from it. At the very centre of our being, at the root of our strongest affections and of our deepest thoughts, we are—I dare to say it—one and all, at times, brethren, conscious of an aspiration which we cannot wholly kill out, an aspiration towards the unknown and the perfect good, an aspiration implanted by that being who is its object. Now, this aspiration of the heart, linked to the prudential sense of weakness in the practical reason, is the raw material—it is the motive power of prayer. Prayer, in the terms of the old definition, is the ascent of the soul towards God. Prayer is the satisfaction of this craving; it is the exercise of

this power; it is obedience to this law within us, which bids us mount upwards out of the depth of our souls towards the source and object of our existence. And thus in the very act of prayer man becomes conscious of a new strength; a new heaven and a new earth are opened to him; the buoyancy of an invigorated life comes to him from above; the fetters which imprison, or the earthly elements which dishonour his soul, are burst or are left behind: he takes his place even now, amid the scenes of time, by a free act of his soul, at the great feast of moral liberty which God prepares for His creatures in the counsels of His eternal love.

There are, I know—too many of them—prayerless, utterly prayerless lives,—lives from which the breath of prayer never ascends towards the source of life; but they are, to omit the graver aspects of the matter, men of stunted, imperfect lives. When prayer is banished from the heart,—when there is no longer that fruitful and blessed interchange of purified desires on the one hand, and of abounding graces on the other—of the petitions ascending from earth met half way by the wealth which descends from heaven—then the true order of human life has perished and gone: then the soul has lost its bearings, and is like a ship drifting on in mid ocean without a compass. Its life may be in many senses active, but such activity is worse than stagnation. To think of a Supreme Being without seeking Him, just as if He were a metaphysical puzzle instead of a living person, is, in the end, scarcely less likely to entail irremediable disaster than sheer forgetfulness of Him. Unable to develop its highest powers, unable to satisfy its thirst to attain its end, the soul, tortured in all its higher moods by the felt mysteriousness of existence itself, darts aimlessly through the worlds of thought, now in this direction,

now in that, like a flurried bird that has lost its way and is pursued by an implacable enemy. The sacred bond which should unite man to God is broken, and the mental and moral powers of man, like the portion of a chain which has suddenly snapped, fall back upon the soul, which buries itself in darkness beneath—too often it is so—beneath the weight of the very faculties which should lift it heavenward. To understand this, I say, brethren, a man need not be a Christian; he need only be a thoughtful man. Prayer to something—prayer of some kind—is the higher language of humanity in all places, at all times. Not to pray is to fall below the true measure of human activity, just as truly as not to think. It is to surrender the noblest element of that prerogative dignity which marks men off as men from the brutes. Heathens have felt this; Deists have felt it. Jews felt it with an intensity all their own; and, therefore, when the two men, the Pharisee and the publican, went up into the temple to pray, they simply obeyed a law which is as old and wide as human thought. They gave expression to an instinct which cannot be ignored without wronging that which is noblest and best in our common humanity. Not to pray is not merely godless: it is, in the larger sense of the term, inhuman.

Ascension Day.

Why stand ye gazing up into Heaven? This same Jesus, which is taken up from you into Heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen Him go into Heaven.—*Acts* i. 11.

SOFT cloud, that while the breeze of May
Chants her glad matins in the leafy arch,
Drawest thy bright veil across the heavenly way,
Meet pavement for an angel's glorious march:

My soul is envious of mine eye,
That it should soar and glide with thee so fast,
The while my grovelling thoughts half-buried lie,
Or lawless roam around this earthly waste.

Chains of my heart, avaunt, I say—
I will arise, and in the strength of love
Pursue the bright track ere it fade away,
My Saviour's pathway to His home above.

Sure, when I reach the point where earth
Melts into nothing from the encumbered sight,
Heaven will o'ercome the attraction of my birth,
And I shall sink in yonder sea of light:

Till resting by the incarnate Lord,
Once bleeding, now triumphant for my sake,
I mark Him, how by seraph hosts adored,
He to earth's lowest cares is still awake.

The sun and every vassal star,
All space, beyond the soar of angel wings,
Wait on His word: and yet He stays His car
For every sigh a contrite suppliant brings.

He listens to the silent tear
For all the anthems of the boundless sky—
And shall our dreams of music bar our ear
To His soul-piercing voice for ever nigh?

Nay, gracious Saviour—but as now
Our thoughts have traced Thee to Thy glory-throne,
So help us evermore with Thee to bow
Where human sorrow breathes her lowly moan.

We must not stand to gaze too long,
Though on unfolding Heaven our gaze we bend,
Where lost behind the bright angelic throng
We see Christ's entering triumph slow ascend.

No fear but we shall soon behold,
Faster than now it fades, that gleam revive,
When issuing from His cloud of fiery gold
Our wasted frames feel the true Sun, and live.

Then shall we see Thee as Thou art,
For ever fixed in no unfruitful gaze,
But such as lifts the new-created heart,
Age after age, in worthier love and praise.

The Collect.

GRANT, we beseech thee, Almighty God, that like as we do believe thy only-begotten Son our Lord Jesus Christ to have ascended into the heavens; so we may also in heart and mind thither ascend, and with him continually dwell, who liveth and reigneth with thee and the Holy Ghost, one God, world without end. *Amen.*

WHERE AND WHAT IS OUR LORD NOW?

There is a solemn question which must be asked, and which, if a man is in earnest, he will inevitably ask; and that question will at once carry him beyond the narrow horizon of a literary æstheticism in his treatment of the matter before us. . . . My brethren, where is Jesus Christ now? and what is He? Does He only speak to us from the pages which were traced by His followers eighteen centuries ago? Is He no more than the first of the shadows of the past, the first of memo-

ries, the first of biographies, the most perfect of human ideals? Is He only an Ideal after all? Does He reign only in virtue of a mighty tradition of human thought and feeling in His favour which creates and supports His imaginary throne? Is He at this moment a really living Being? And if living, is He a human ghost, flitting we know not where in the unseen world, and Himself awaiting an award at the hands of the Everlasting? Or is He a super-angelic Intelligence, sinless and invested with judicial and creative powers, but as far separated from the inaccessible Life of God as must be even the first of creatures from the Everlasting Creator? Does He reign in any true sense, either on earth or in heaven? Or is His Regal Government in any degree independent of the submission or the resistance which His subjects may offer to it? Is He present personally as a living Power in this our world? Has He any certain relations to you? Does He think of you, care for you, act upon you? Can He help you? Can He save you from your sins? can He blot out their stains and crush their power? can He deliver you in your death-agony from the terrors of dissolution, and bid you live with Him in a brighter world for ever? Can you approach Him now, commune with Him now, cling to Him now, become one with Him now, not by an unsubstantial act of your own imaginations, but by an actual objective transaction, making you incorporate with His life? Or is the Christian answer to these most pressing questions a weakly delusion, or, at any rate, too definite a statement? and must we content ourselves with the analysis of an historical Character, while we confess that the Living Personality which once created and animated it may or may not be God; may or may not be able to hear us and help us; may or may not be in

distinct conscious existence at this moment; may or may not have been altogether annihilated some eighteen hundred years ago? Do you urge that it is idle to ask these questions, since we have no adequate materials at hand for dealing with them? That is a point which it is hoped may be more or less cleared up during the progress of our present inquiry. But if such questions are to remain unanswered, do not shut your eyes to the certain consequence. A Christ who is conceived of as only pictured in an ancient literature may, indeed, furnish you with the theme of a magnificent poetry, but He cannot be the present object of your religious life. A religion must have for its object an actually Living Person; and the purpose of the definitions which you deprecate is to exhibit and assert the exact force of the revealed statements respecting the Eternal Life of Christ, and so to place Him as a Living Person in all His Divine Majesty and all His Human Tenderness before the eye of the soul which seeks Him. When you fairly commit yourself to the assertion that Christ is at this moment living at all, you leave the strictly historical and æsthetical treatment of the Gospel record of His life and character, and you enter, whether it be in a catholic or in an heretical spirit, upon the territory of Church definitions. In your little private sphere you bow to that practical necessity which obliged great Fathers and Councils, often much against their will, to take counsel of the Spirit who illuminated the collective Church, and to give point and strength to Christian faith by authoritative elucidations of Christian doctrine. Nor are you therefore rendered insensible to the beauty of the Gospel narrative because you have discovered that thus to ascertain and bear in mind, so far as Revelation warrants your effort, what is the great Personal dignity and

what the enduring prerogatives of Him in whom you have believed, is in truth a matter of the utmost practical importance to your religious life.—[*From the first of the Eight Bampton Lectures on "The Divinity of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ."*]

Sunday after Ascension.

As every man hath received the gift, even so minister the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God.—1 *St. Peter* iv. 10.

THE earth, that in her genial breast
Makes for the down a kindly nest,
Where, wafted by the warm south-west,
It floats at pleasure,
Yields, thankful, of her very best,
To nurse her treasure:

True to her trust, tree, herb, or reed,
She renders for each scattered seed,
And to her Lord with duteous heed
Gives large increase:
Thus year by year she works unfee'd,
And will not cease.

Woe worth these barren hearts of ours,
Where thou hast set celestial flowers,
And watered with more balmy showers
Than e'er distilled
In Eden, on the ambrosial bowers—
Yet nought we yield.

Largely Thou givest, gracious Lord,
Largely Thy gifts should be restored;

Freely Thou givest, and Thy word
Is "Freely give."[1]
He only who forgets to hoard
Has learnt to live.

Wisely Thou givest—all around
Thine equal rays are resting found,
Yet varying so on various ground
They pierce and strike,
That not two roseate cups are crowned
With dew alike:

E'en so, in silence, likest Thee,
Steals on soft-handed Charity,
Tempering her gifts, that seem so free
By time and place,
Till not a woe the bleak world see,
But finds her grace:

Eyes to the blind, and to the lame
Feet, and to sinners wholesome blame,
To starving bodies food and flame,
By turns she brings;
To humble souls, that sink for shame,
Lends heaven-ward wings:

Leads them the way our Saviour went,
And shows Love's treasure yet unspent;
As when the unclouded heavens were rent
Opening His road,
Nor yet His Holy Spirit sent
To our abode.

[1] St. Matthew x. 8.

Ten days the eternal doors displayed
Were wondering (so the Almighty bade)
Whom Love enthroned would send, in aid
Of souls that mourn,
Left orphans in earth's dreary shade
As soon as born.

Open they stand, that prayers in throngs
May rise on high, and holy songs,
Such incense as of right belongs
To the true shrine,
Where stands the Healer of all wrongs
In light divine;

The golden censer in His hand,
He offers hearts from every land,
Tied to His own by gentlest band
Of silent Love:
About Him wingèd blessings stand
In act to move.

A little while, and they shall fleet
From Heaven to earth, attendants meet
On the life-giving Paraclete,
Speeding His flight,
With all that sacred is and sweet,
On saints to light.

Apostles, Prophets, Pastors, all
Shall feel the shower of Mercy fall,
And starting at the Almighty's call,
Give what He gave,
Till their high deeds the world appal,
And sinners save.

The Collect.

O God the King of glory, who hast exalted thine only Son Jesus Christ with great triumph unto thy kingdom in heaven; We beseech thee, leave us not comfortless; but send to us thine Holy Ghost to comfort us, and exalt us unto the same place whither our Saviour Christ is gone before, who liveth and reigneth with thee and the Holy Ghost, one God, world without end. *Amen.*

THE BARRIER OF WEALTH.

Let us look at some of the barriers which have been raised against man's universal right to honour by the prejudices of man.

There is, first of all, and, morally speaking, lowest of all, the barrier of wealth. Wealth honours wealth; income pays respect to income; but it is wont to cherish, in its secret heart, an unmeasured contempt for poverty. This barrier is apt to be raised to a great height by the successful classes in a commercial country; till at last wealth comes almost to be identified with virtue, and poverty with vice. If it were only meant that labour which produces wealth is virtue, and that idleness which creates poverty is vice, there would be no ground for dissent. But the feeling of a plutocracy is something very different from this; it is the possession of wealth, and of the social power which is conferred by wealth, which constitutes, according to this standard, the title to honour. To believe that a man with £60 a year is just as much deserving of respect as a man with £6000, you must be seriously a Christian. A philosophical estimate of men and things is not really proof against the inroads of the sentiment which makes the possession of mere income the standard of honour. . . . Do not misunderstand me. Wealth has its privileges, as, much more, it

has its responsibilities. But to refuse honour to an immortal spirit, because here, in its state of probation, it is not encrusted with material wealth, implies a failure to apprehend the true dignity of life so prodigious, that I must not attempt to characterise it. Rather let me ask you to consider what was meant by our Lord's words of counsel to the rich young man.

Whitsunday.

And suddenly there came a sound from Heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost.—*Acts* ii. 2–4.

When God of old came down from Heaven,
In power and wrath He came;
Before His feet the clouds were riven,
Half darkness and half flame:

Around the trembling mountain's base
The prostrate people lay;
A day of wrath, and not of grace;
A dim and dreadful day.

But when He came the second time,
He came in power and love,
Softer than gale at morning prime,
Hovered His Holy Dove.

The fires that rushed on Sinai down
In sudden torrents dread,
Now gently light, a glorious crown,
On every sainted head.

Like arrows went those lightnings forth
  Winged with the sinner's doom,
But these, like tongues, o'er all the earth
  Proclaiming life to come:

And as on Israel's awe-struck ear
  The voice exceeding loud,
The trump that angel's quake to hear,
  Thrilled from the deep, dark cloud;

So, when the Spirit of our God
  Came down His flock to find,
A voice from Heaven was heard abroad,
  A rushing, mighty wind.

Nor doth the outward ear alone
  At that high warning start;
Conscience gives back the appalling tone;
  'Tis echoed in the heart.

It fills the Church of God; it fills
  The sinful world around;
Only in stubborn hearts and wills
  No place for it is found.

To other strains our souls are set:
  A giddy whirl of sin
Fills ear and brain, and will not let
  Heaven's harmonies come in.

Come Lord, come Wisdom, Love, and Power,
  Open our ears to hear;
Let us not miss the accepted hour;
  Save, Lord, by Love or Fear.

The Collect.

GOD, who as at this time didst teach the hearts of thy faithful people, by the sending to them the light of thy Holy Spirit; Grant us by the same Spirit to have a right judgment in all things, and evermore to rejoice in his holy comfort; through the merits of Christ Jesus our Saviour, who liveth and reigneth with thee, in the unity of the same Spirit, one God, world without end. *Amen.*

THE DIVINE INDWELLING A MOTIVE TO HOLINESS.

In moments of moral surprise, in moments of unusual depression, in moments of a felt sense of isolation which threatens to take the heart out of our whole life, in moments of spasmodic daring, when ordinary sanctions have, as it seems, we know not why, lost their hold upon us, it is well to fall back upon the reassuring, tranquilising, invigorating resources of such an appeal as that of the Apostle: "Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?"

Monday in Whitsun-Week.

So the Lord scattered them abroad from thence upon the face of all the earth; and they left off to build the city.—*Genesis* xi. 8.

SINCE all that is not Heaven must fade,
Light be the hand of Ruin laid
Upon the home I love:
With lulling spell let soft Decay
Steal on, and spare the giant sway,
The crash of tower and grove.

Far opening down some woodland deep
In their own quiet glade should sleep
The relics dear to thought,
And wildflower wreaths from side to side
Their waving tracery hang, to hide
What ruthless Time has wrought.

Such are the visions green and sweet
That o'er the wistful fancy fleet
In Asia's sea-like plain,
Where slowly round his isles of sand,
Euphrates through the lonely land
Winds toward the pearly main.

Slumber is there, but not of rest;
There her forlorn and weary nest
The famished hawk has found,
The wild dog howls at fall of night,
The serpent's rustling coils affright
The traveller on his round.

What shapeless form, half lost on high,[1]
Half seen against the evening sky,
Seems like a ghost to glide,
And watch, from Babel's crumbling heap,
Where in her shadow, fast asleep,
Lies fallen imperial Pride?

With half-closed eye a lion there
Is basking in his noontide lair,
Or prowls in twilight gloom.

[1] See Sir R. K. Porter's Travels, ii. 387: "In my second visit to Birs Nimrood, my party suddenly halted, having descried several dark objects moving along the summit of its hill, which they construed into dismounted Arabs on the look-out. I took out my glass to examine, and soon distinguished that the causes of our alarm were two or three majestic lions, taking the air upon the heights of the pyramid."

The golden city's king he seems,
Such as in old prophetic dreams [1]
Sprang from rough ocean's womb.

But where are now his eagle wings,
That sheltered erst a thousand kings,
Hiding the glorious sky
From half the nations, till they own
No holier name, no mightier throne?
That vision is gone by.

Quenched is the golden statue's ray,[2]
The breath of Heaven has blown away
What toiling earth had piled,
Scattering wise heart and crafty hand,
As breezes strew on ocean's sand
The fabrics of a child.

Divided thence through every age,
Thy rebels, Lord, their warfare wage,
And hoarse and jarring all
Mount up their heaven-assailing cries
To Thy bright watchmen in the skies
From Babel's shattered wall.

Thrice only since, with blended might
The nations on that haughty height
Have met to scale the Heaven:
Thrice only might a seraph's look
A moment's shade of sadness brook—
Such power to guilt was given.

Now the fierce Bear and Leopard keen [3]
Are perished as they ne'er had been,
Oblivion is their home:

[1] Daniel vii. 4. [2] Daniel ii. and iii. [3] Daniel vii. 5, 6.

Ambition's boldest dream and last
Must melt before the clarion blast
That sounds the dirge of Rome.

Heroes and Kings, obey the charm,
Withdraw the proud high-reaching arm;
There is an oath on high,
That ne'er on brow of mortal birth
Shall blend again the crowns of earth,
Nor in according cry

Her many voices mingling own
One tyrant Lord, one idol throne:
But to His triumph soon
He shall descend, who rules above,
And the pure language of His love [1]
All tongues of men shall tune.

Nor let Ambition heartless mourn;
When Babel's very ruins burn,
Her high desires may breathe;—
O'ercome thyself, and thou may'st share
With Christ His Father's throne,[2] and wear
The world's imperial wreath.

INFLUENCES OF THE HOLY SPIRIT.

The Bible is like nature in its immense, its exhaustless variety: like nature, because it reflects all the higher moods of the human soul; because it does much more —because it brings us face to face with the infinity of

[1] Then will I turn to the people a pure language, that they may all call upon the name of the Lord, to serve Him with one consent.—*Zephaniah* iii. 9.

[2] To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with Me in My throne.—*Revelation* iii. 21.

the Divine Life. In the Bible the wind of heaven pays scant heed to our anticipations or our prejudices; it "bloweth where it listeth." It breathes not only in the Divine charities of the Gospels, not only in the lyrical sallies of the Epistles, not only in the great announcements scattered here and there in Holy Scripture of the magnificence, or the compassion, or the benevolence of God, but also in the stern language of the prophets, in the warnings and lessons of the historical books, in the revelations of Divine justice and of human responsibility which abound in either Testament. "Where it listeth." Not only where our sense of literary beauty is stimulated, as in St. Paul's picture of charity, by lines which have taken captive the imagination of the world; not only where feeling and conscience echo the verdict of authority and the promptings of reverence, but also where this is not the case,—where neither precept nor example stimulates us, and we are left face to face with historical or ethical, which appears to us to inspire no spiritual enthusiasm, or which is highly suggestive of critical difficulty. Let us be patient; we shall understand, if we will only wait, how these features of the Bible, too, are integral parts of a living whole. Here, as elsewhere, the Spirit breathes,—in the genealogies of the Chronicles as in the Last Discourse in St. John, though with an admitted difference of manner and degree. He "bloweth where He listeth." The apostle's words respecting the Old Testament are true of the New: "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness." And, "Whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope."

Tuesday in Whitsun-Week.

When He putteth forth His own sheep, He goeth before them.
—*St. John* x. 4.

(*Addressed to Candidates for Ordination.*)

"LORD, in Thy field I work all day,
I read, I teach, I warn, I pray,
And yet these wilful wandering sheep
Within Thy folds I cannot keep.

"I journey, yet no step is won—
Alas! the weary course I run!
Like sailors shipwrecked in their dreams,
All powerless and benighted seems."

What? wearied out with half a life?
Scared with this smooth unbloody strife?
Think where thy coward hopes had flown
Had Heaven held out the martyr's crown.

How couldst thou hang upon the Cross,
To whom a weary hour is loss?
Or how the thorns and scourging brook,
Who shrinkest from a scornful look?

Yet ere thy craven spirit faints
Hear thine own King, the King of Saints;
Though thou wert toiling in the grave,
'Tis He can cheer thee, He can save.

He is the eternal mirror bright,
Where angels view the Father's light,
And yet in Him the simplest swain
May read his homely lesson plain.

Early to quit His home on earth,
And claim his high celestial birth,

Alone with His true Father found
Within the Temple's solemn round :—

Yet in meek duty to abide
For many a year at Mary's side,
Nor heed, though restless spirits ask,
"What! hath the Christ forgot His task?"

Conscious of Deity within,
To bow before an heir of sin,
With folded arms on humble breast,
By His own servant washed and blest :—

Then full of Heaven, the mystic Dove
Hovering His gracious brow above,
To shun the voice and eye of praise,
And in the wild His trophies raise :—

With hymns of angels in His ears,
Back to His task of woe and tears,
Unmurmuring through the world to roam
With not a wish or thought at home :—

All but Himself to heal and save,
Till ripened for the cross and grave,
He to His Father gently yield
The breath that our redemption sealed :—

Then to unearthly life arise,
Yet not at once to seek the skies,
But glide awhile from saint to saint,
Lest on our lonely way we faint;

And through the cloud by glimpses show
How bright in Heaven the marks will glow
Of the true cross, imprinted deep
Both on the Shepherd and the sheep :—

When out of sight, in heart and prayer
Thy chosen people still to bear,
And from behind Thy glorious veil
Shed light that cannot change or fail:—

This is Thy pastoral course, O Lord,
Till we be saved, and Thou adored;—
Thy course, and ours—but who are they
Who follow on the narrow way?

And yet of Thee from year to year
The Church's solemn chant we hear,
As from Thy cradle to Thy throne
She swells her high heart-cheering tone.

Listen, ye poor white-robèd souls,
Whom in her list she now enrolls,
And gird ye for your high emprize
By these her thrilling minstrelsies;

And whereso'er in earth's wide field,
Ye lift, for Him, the red-cross shield,
Be this your song, your joy, and pride—
"Our Champion went before and died."

THE GREAT RESOLVES OF LIFE.

The greatest practical resolves that have enriched and beautified human life in Christian times have been arrived at in prayer, ever since the day when, at the most solemn service of the Apostolical Church, the Holy Ghost said, "Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them" (Acts xiii. 2). It is prayer which prevents religion from degenerating into mere speculative thought on the one side, or into mere philanthropy on the other. In prayer the man of action will

never become so absorbed in his work as to be indifferent to the truth, which is its original motive. In prayer the man of study and contemplation will never forget that truth is given, not so much that it may interest and stimulate our understandings, as that it may govern and regulate our life. And thus it is that prayer is of such vital importance to the wellbeing of the soul. Study may be dispensed with by those who work with their hands for God; handiwork may be dispensed with by those who seek Him in books and thought. But prayer is indispensable, alike for workers and students, alike for scholar and peasant, alike for the educated and the unlettered. For we all have to seek God's face above; we all have souls to be sanctified and saved; we all have sins and passions to beat back and to conquer. And these things are achieved pre-eminently by prayer, which is properly and representatively the action of religion. It is the action whereby we men, in all our frailty and defilement, associate ourselves with our Divine Advocate on high, and realise the sublime bond which in Him, the One Mediator between God and man, unites us in our utter unworthiness to the strong and All-Holy God.

Trinity Sunday.

If I have told you earthly things, and ye believe not, how shall ye believe if I tell you of heavenly things?—*St. John* iii. 12.

CREATOR, Saviour, strengthening Guide,
Now on Thy mercy's ocean wide
Far out of sight we seem to glide.

Help us, each hour, with steadier eye
To search the deepening mystery,
The wonders of Thy sea and sky.

The blessèd angels look and long
To praise Thee with a worthier song,
And yet our silence does Thee wrong.

Along the Church's central space
The sacred weeks, with unfelt pace,
Have borne us on from grace to grace.

As travellers on some woodland height,
When wintry suns are gleaming bright,
Lose in arched glades their tangled sight;—

By glimpses such as dreamers love
Through her grey veil the leafless grove
Shows where the distant shadows rove;—

Such trembling joy the soul o'er-awes
As nearer to Thy shrine she draws:—
And now before the choir we pause.

The door is closed—but soft and deep
Around the awful arches sweep
Such airs as soothe a hermit's sleep.

From each carved nook and fretted bend
Cornice and gallery seem to send
Tones that with seraph hymns might blend.

Three solemn parts together twine
In harmony's mysterious line;
Three solemn aisles approach the shrine:

Yet all are One—together all,
In thoughts that awe but not appal,
Teach the adoring heart to fall.

Within these walls each fluttering guest
Is gently lured to one safe nest—
Without, 'tis moaning and unrest.

The busy world a thousand ways
Is hurrying by, nor ever stays
To catch a note of Thy dear praise.

Why tarries not her chariot wheel
That o'er her with no vain appeal
One gust of heavenly song might steal?

Alas! for her Thy opening flowers
Unheeded breathe to summer showers,
Unheard the music of Thy bowers.

What echoes from the sacred dome
The selfish spirit may o'ercome
That will not hear of love or home!

The heart that scorned a father's care,
How can it rise in filial prayer?
How an all-seeing Guardian bear?

Or how shall envious brethren own
A Brother on the eternal throne,
Their Father's joy, their hope alone?

How shall Thy Spirit's gracious wile
The sullen brow of gloom beguile,
That frowns on sweet Affection's smile?

Eternal One, Almighty Trine!
(Since Thou art ours, and we are Thine),
By all Thy love did once resign,

By all the grace Thy heavens still hide,
We pray Thee, keep us at Thy side,
Creator, Saviour, strengthening Guide!

The Collect.

ALMIGHTY and everlasting God, who hast given unto us thy servants grace by the confession of a true faith to acknowledge the glory of the eternal Trinity, and in the power of the Divine Majesty to worship the Unity; We beseech thee, that thou wouldest keep us stedfast in this faith, and evermore defend us from all adversities, who livest and reignest, one God, world without end. *Amen.*

RELIGIOUS RESERVE.

Those to whom the saving power of Christ's Cross is most intimately certain, as being to them a matter of personal experience, cannot at once, and without difficulty, bring themselves to say much about it. We do not, any of us, readily talk about that which most nearly touches us. Men have no objections to talk politics in public, even when they feel strongly on political questions; and the reason is, because politics address themselves not to that which is exclusively personal, but only to those common sympathies and judgments which we share with some section of our countrymen. But no man will consent, if he can help it, to discuss his near relations, or a family interest in public. This is not because the details of private life do not interest other people; every one must know how very far this is from being true. It is because the feelings which they arouse in those concerned are too tender to bear exposure.

And this motive operates not unfrequently in the case of religion. Religion, even in its lower and most imperfect forms, twines itself round the heart like a family

affection; it is throned in an inner sanctuary of the soul, the door of which is closed to all except a very few, if not indeed to everybody. Religion has its outward and visible side; its public acts of homage; its recognised obligations. But its real strength and empire is within; it is in regions where spiritual activity neither meets the eye nor commits itself to language. All to whom our Saviour is a real Being know that their souls have had and have relations with Him which belong to the most sacred moments of life. If we may employ a metaphor which Holy Scripture suggests, they hesitate to discuss these relations almost as naturally as a bride would shrink from taking the world into her confidence. The case of each soul is altogether peculiar to itself; the relations of each soul to the Lord of souls are, like the character or the countenance of every man, quite unique. And therefore the best of men are not unfrequently least able to talk freely upon the one subject upon which they feel most deeply. Especially is this the case with us Englishmen, who are naturally at once sincere and reserved; reserved perhaps, in fact, because sincere. Beyond any other race of men we shrink from the risk of saying more than we feel, or even from the duty of saying as much as we feel, unless it be strictly necessary to do so.

First Sunday after Trinity.

So Joshua smote all the country, . . . and all their kings: he left none remaining.—*Joshua* x. 40.

WHERE is the land with milk and honey flowing,
The promise of our God, our fancy's theme?
Here over shattered walls dank weeds are growing,
And blood and fire have run in mingled stream;

Like oaks and cedars all around
The giant corses strew the ground,
And haughty Jericho's cloud-piercing wall
Lies where it sank at Joshua's trumpet call.

These are not scenes for pastoral dance at even,
For moonlight rovings in the fragrant glades,
Soft slumbers in the open eye of Heaven,
And all the listless joy of summer shades.
We in the midst of ruins live,
Which every hour dread warning give,
Nor may our household vine or fig-tree hide
The broken arches of old Canaan's pride.

Where is the sweet repose of hearts repenting,
The deep calm sky, the sunshine of the soul,
Now Heaven and earth are to our bliss consenting,
And all the Godhead joins to make us whole?
The triple crown of mercy now
Is ready for the suppliant's brow,
By the Almighty Three for ever planned,
And from behind the cloud held out by Jesus' hand.

"Now, Christians, hold your own—the land before ye
Is open—win your way, and take your rest."
So sounds our war-note; but our path of glory
By many a cloud is darkened and unblest:
And daily as we downward glide,
Life's ebbing stream on either side
Shows at each turn some mouldering hope or joy,
The man seems following still the funeral of the Boy.

Open our eyes, Thou Sun of life and gladness,
That we may see that glorious world of Thine!
It shines for us in vain, while drooping sadness
Enfolds us here like mist: come, Power benign,

Touch our chilled hearts with vernal smile,
Our wintry course do Thou beguile,
Nor by the wayside ruins let us mourn,
Who have th' eternal towers for our appointed bourne.

The Collect.

O God, the strength of all them that put their trust in thee, mercifully accept our prayers; and because through the weakness of our mortal nature we can do no good thing without thee, grant us the help of thy grace, that in keeping of thy commandments we may please thee, both in will and deed; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

RESISTING RIDICULE.

Many men who would pass through the fire for what they believe to be right cannot face a sneer. They have abundant physical courage—the courage of animals with strong nerves. They have little moral courage—the courage of men with sensitive consciences and strong wills. Moral courage is, indeed, a higher courage than physical courage. It is more difficult to sustain; it gets less encouragement from the results of victory. Yet why should ridicule be so formidable? What is a sneer, in most cases, but the confession that an argument is not at command? As Dr. Johnson said, you cannot refute a sneer. But this is because there is nothing solid to refute. The cleverest things in an infidel writer like Voltaire are sneers; they are not arguments. But they did their work upon two-thirds of the French people none the less powerfully for that. Until a man has learned to estimate ridicule at its true value, he has not a chance of overcoming the world,—whether it be the world of a public school, or the world

of a business establishment, or the world of a learned profession, or the great world, which includes all these, of mixed and common English life.

And the best antidote to ridicule is devotion to a friend. Ridicule tells powerfully against fancy theories; its shafts fall powerless on loyal hearts. Laugh at a new social or political doctrine, and you may rend it to pieces more readily than by argument. Laugh at men whose hearts have been won by a character of great strength and beauty, and you will be hoarse with laughter without injuring anybody. Now, Faith reveals to Christians a Living Person, who is the object of their enthusiastic love. And in the depth of that love there is a store of moral power which the ridicule of the world cannot touch.

THE CHANGELESS FRONTIERS OF EARTHLY LIFE.

The leading conditions of life do not change. We are born into the world just as were our earliest, our rudest ancestors. We leave it just as certainly as they did—often, perhaps, with rather more of suffering than less, because our science has enabled us very slightly to prolong life under conditions which would have forfeited life for them. Our hold upon it depends in the main on the same rules and laws as theirs did, and thus the frontiers of earthly life remain what they were. None of our inventions, none of our improvements, no part of our progress, scientific or social, has done anything whatever to enlarge them. The one great discovery—the discovery which should provide an escape from physical death—is just as far off from us as it was when Cæsar conquered Britain. And, as a consequence of this constancy in the leading conditions of human existence,

the relations of man to the eternal God are constant too. Now and then, in moments of passing excitement and illusion, men speak as if they could do without God, —as if He were only part of the mental furniture of some past age, and had been left behind in the distance of history; as if they were in some sense degraded by this dependence on an unseen Being who holds the key to the secret of their destiny. But this kind of language never has borne—never will bear—the wear and tear of reflection, of discussion, of life. The most Ancient of Beings is also (we may reverently say it) the most modern. "I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last." And man does not lose anything by confessing himself dependent on the Maker and Ruler of this universe. Nothing but a demonstration that God does not exist will prevent the wisest and best of men from seeking the source of that which they are and have in that inexhaustible life to the end of time.

Second Sunday after Trinity.

Marvel not, my brethren, if the world hate you. We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren.—1 *St. John* iii. 13, 14.

THE clouds that wrap the setting sun
When Autumn's softest gleams are ending,
Where all bright hues together run
In sweet confusion blending:—
Why, as we watch their floating wreath,
Seem they the breath of life to breathe?
To Fancy's eye their motions prove
They mantle round the Sun for love.

When up some woodland dale we catch
The many twinkling-smile[1] of ocean,
Or with pleased ear bewildered watch
His chime of restless motion;
Still as the surging waves retire
They seem to gasp with strong desire,
Such signs of love old Ocean gives,
We cannot choose but think he lives.

Wouldst thou the life of souls discern?
Nor human wisdom nor divine
Helps thee by aught beside to learn;
Love is life's only sign.
The spring of the regenerate heart,
The pulse, the glow of every part,
Is the true love of Christ our Lord,
As man embraced, as God adored.

But he, whose heart will bound to mark
The full bright burst of summer morn,
Loves too each little dewy spark
By leaf or flow'ret worn:
Cheap forms, and common hues, 'tis true,
Through the bright shower-drop meet his view;
The colouring may be of this earth;
The lustre comes of heavenly birth.

E'en so, who loves the Lord aright,
No soul of man can worthless find;
All will be precious in his sight,
Since Christ on all hath shined:
But chiefly Christian souls; for they,
Though worn and soiled with sinful clay,
Are yet, to eyes that see them true,
All glistening with baptismal dew.

[1] . . . ποντίων τε κυμάτων
ἀνήριθμον γέλασμα. . . .—Æschyl Prom. 89.

Then marvel not, if such as bask
In purest light of innocence,
Hope against hope, in love's dear task,
Spite of all dark offence.
If they who hate the trespass most,
Yet, when all other love is lost,
Love the poor sinner, marvel not;
Christ's mark outwears the rankest blot.

No distance breaks the tie of blood;
Brothers are brothers evermore;
Nor wrong, nor wrath of deadliest mood,
That magic may o'erpower;
Oft, ere the common source be known,
The kindred drops will claim their own,
And throbbing pulses silently
Move heart towards heart by sympathy.

So is it with true Christian hearts;
Their mutual share in Jesus' blood
An everlasting bond imparts
Of holiest brotherhood:
Oh! might we all our lineage prove,
Give and forgive, do good and love,
By soft endearments in kind strife
Lightening the load of daily life!

There is much need; for not as yet
Are we in shelter or repose,
The holy house is still beset
With leaguer of stern foes;
Wild thoughts within, bad men without,
All evil spirits round about,
Are banded in unblest device,
To spoil Love's earthly paradise.

Then draw we nearer day by day,
Each to his brethren, all to God;
Let the world take us as she may,
We must not change our road;
Not wondering, though in grief, to find
The martyr's foe still keep her mind;
But fixed to hold Love's banner fast,
And by submission win at last.

The Collect.

O LORD, who never failest to help and govern them whom thou dost bring up in thy steadfast fear and love; Keep us, we beseech thee, under the protection of thy good providence, and make us to have a perpetual fear and love of thy holy Name; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

A GRAND DISTINCTION.

What the representatives of an advanced civilisation are among a herd of savages, such are the saints of God when we compare them with ordinary men. They have higher aims, larger horizons, more commanding points of view, a loftier, nay, a totally distinct conception of life and destiny. It is said that the Roman conquerors of the world carried in their faces the secret of the triumphs of an imperial people, but more do sincere Christians walk the earth with the mien and bearing of a race of immortals; although the rays of spiritual majesty which stream forth from the burning spirit within them, often do but illumine the weakness of the body which yet encases it. Of such it is literally true, that "whether they live, they live unto the Lord, or whether they die, they die unto the Lord." They know that the few years of time are but a halt at the gate of eternity; and that

true wisdom consists in practically understanding the ineffaceable distinction which parts that which perishes before our very eyes from that which must last for ever.

Third Sunday after Trinity.

There is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth.—*St. Luke* xv. 10.

O HATEFUL spell of Sin! when friends are nigh,
To make stern Memory tell her tale unsought,
And raise accusing shades of hours gone by,
To come between us and all kindly thought!

Chilled at her touch, the self-reproaching soul
Flies from the heart and home she dearest loves
To where lone mountains tower, or billows roll,
Or to your endless depth, ye solemn groves.

In vain: the averted cheek in loneliest dell
Is conscious of a gaze it cannot bear,
The leaves that rustle near us seem to tell
Our heart's sad secret to the silent air.

Nor is the dream untrue; for all around
The heavens are watching with their thousand eyes;
We cannot pass our guardian angel's bound,
Resigned or sullen, he will hear our sighs.

He in the mazes of the budding wood
Is near, and mourns to see our thankless glance
Dwell coldly, where the fresh green earth is strewed
With the first flowers that lead the vernal dance.

In wasteful bounty showered, they smile unseen,
Unseen by man—but what if purer sprights
By moonlight o'er their dewy bosoms lean
To adore the Father of all gentle lights?

If such there be, O grief and shame to think
That sight of thee should overcloud their joy,
A new-born soul, just waiting on the brink
Of endless life, yet wrapt in earth's annoy!

O turn, and be thou turned! the selfish tear,
In bitter thoughts of low-born care begun,
Let it flow on, but flow refined and clear,
The turbid waters brightening as they run.

Let it flow on, till all thine earthly heart
In penitential drops have ebbed away,
Then fearless turn where Heaven hath set thy part,
Nor shudder at the Eye that saw thee stray.

O lost and found! all gentle souls below
Their dearest welcome shall prepare, and prove
Such joy o'er thee, as raptured seraphs know,
Who learn their lesson at the Throne of Love.

The Collect.

O LORD, we beseech thee mercifully to hear us; and grant that we, to whom thou hast given an hearty desire to pray, may by thy mighty aid be defended and comforted in all dangers and adversities; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

THE CRY OF THE PENITENT.

Since this day last year some may be conscious of a great fall from God. Until then there had been many faults more or less grave, but no deliberate offence,—no looking God first in the face, and then resisting Him. Since the fatal hour when that took place all has changed. The light heart, the bright eye, the open countenance, the simple integrity of purpose, all have gone. You carry about with you a wound which you dare not probe. It

is festering in secret; it threatens your spiritual being with corruption and death. "My loins," you cry, "are filled with a sore disease; there is no whole part in my body. I am feeble and sore smitten. I have roared for the very disquietness of my heart." And yet there is this cheerful feature in your case—that you do not shut your eyes to it. The worst of all states is to have fallen away from God and not to know it. You, at least, are not under this illusion. You are not now admiring, petting, extolling the false self which your friends have made for you. You see your true self, poor and miserable, and blind and lame. You have plucked away the tinsel coverings of life; you see the skeleton below. The past illusions of your self-love are to you now but a dreadful irony. Perhaps you are shocked at the falsehood, at the emptiness of the years which led you up to your fall through a forest of illusions. It seems to you as if all was lost—as if nothing could be saved out of the ruin within; as if love, joy, peace, prayer, all had vanished; as if despair in the presence of recognised truth must practically lead to the same result as easy indifference to, or forgetfulness of, deadly evil. No, brethren, it is not so. This sore conscience, like a sore body—like a sore heart—and more completely, should lead you to God. He is the refuge not only of the sick and the sorrowful, but also and pre-eminently of the repentant. He has left you in no doubt. He will meet you if you will turn to Him. Already He is waiting with the best robe, with the fatted calf, at the gate of paradise. His eternal Son, incarnate, crucified for you, is the pledge, the secret of His forgiveness. In the sacrifice offered on Calvary you have a certain, warranted pardon. In the heart of Jesus you may find a refuge for the aching misery of the past. "If any man sin,

we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous, and He is the propitiation for our sins." You have only to join the great company of penitents which, with the company of the sick and the company of the sorrowful, cries from age to age at the foot of the cross, "Lord, Thou hast been our refuge from one generation to another."

Fourth Sunday after Trinity.

For the earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God. For the creature was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of Him who hath subjected the same in hope, because the creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God. For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now.—*Romans* viii. 19-22.

It was not then a poet's dream,
An idle vaunt of song,
Such as beneath the moon's soft gleam
On vacant fancies throng;

Which bids us see in heaven and earth,
In all fair things around,
Strong yearnings for a blest new birth
With sinless glories crowned;

Which bids us hear, at each sweet pause
From care and want and toil,
When dewy eve her curtain draws
Over the day's turmoil,

In the low chant of wakeful birds,
In the deep weltering flood,
In whispering leaves, these solemn words—
"God made us all for good."

All true, all faultless, all in tune,
Creation's wondrous choir,
Opened in mystic unison
To last till time expire.

And still it lasts: by day and night,
With one consenting voice,
All hymn Thy glory, Lord, aright,
All worship and rejoice.

Man only mars the sweet accord,
O'erpowering with "harsh din"
The music of Thy works and word,
Ill matched with grief and sin.

Sin is with man at morning break,
And through the live-long day
Deafens the ear that fain would wake
To Nature's simple lay.

But when eve's silent footfall steals
Along the eastern sky,
And one by one to earth reveals
Those purer fires on high,

When one by one each human sound
Dies on the awful ear,
Then Nature's voice no more is drowned,
She speaks, and we must hear.

Then pours she on the Christian heart
That warning still and deep,
At which high spirits of old would start
E'en from their Pagan sleep,

Just guessing, through their murky blind,
Few, faint, and baffling sight,

Streaks of a brighter heaven behind,
A cloudless depth of light.

Such thoughts, the wreck of Paradise,
Through many a dreary age,
Upbore whate'er of good and wise
Yet lived in bard or sage:

They marked what agonising throes
Shook the great mother's womb;
But Reason's spells might not disclose
The gracious birth to come;

Nor could th' enchantress Hope forecast
God's secret love and power;
The travail pangs of Earth must last
Till her appointed hour;

The hour that saw from opening heaven
Redeeming glory stream,
Beyond the summer hues of even,
Beyond the mid-day beam.

Thenceforth, to eyes of high desire,
The meanest things below,
As with a seraph's robe of fire
Invested, burn and glow:

The rod of Heaven has touched them all,
The word from Heaven is spoken;
"Rise, shine, and sing, thou captive thrall:
Are not thy fetters broken?

"The God Who hallowed thee and blest,
Pronouncing thee all good—
Hath He not all thy wrongs redrest,
And all thy bliss renewed?

"Why mourn'st thou still as one bereft,
Now that the eternal Son
His blessèd home in Heaven hath left
To make thee all His own?"

Thou mourn'st because Sin lingers still
In Christ's new heaven and earth;
Because our rebel works and will
Stain our immortal birth:

Because, as Love and Prayer grow cold,
The Saviour hides His face,
And worldlings blot the temple's gold
With uses vile and base.

Hence all thy groans and travail pains,
Hence, till thy God return,
In Wisdom's ear thy blithest strains,
Oh Nature, seem to mourn.

The Collect.

O God, the protector of all that trust in thee, without whom nothing is strong, nothing is holy; Increase and multiply upon us thy mercy; that, thou being our ruler and guide, we may so pass through things temporal, that we finally lose not the things eternal: Grant this, O heavenly Father, for Jesus Christ's sake our Lord. *Amen.*

A BLESSING TURNED INTO A CURSE.

Let it be thankfully and joyfully granted that as a means to a higher end, material improvement is a healthful condition of life, and a blessing from God. But its exaggeration, at the expense of that which it should subserve, is a curse, than which none is more fatal to the progress of man. When the sense of the Unseen and the Eternal and all the finer sympathies

have been crushed out by the dead weight or worship of matter, man sinks in the creation of God, even though he should learn to wield more and more power year by year over the dead atoms around him. Mr. Buckle remarkably illustrates one side of this position in that able chapter of his work on Civilisation, in which he traces the almost exclusive interest in physical studies, combined with a widespread scepticism, which characterised the intellectual movement of France in the period immediately preceding the culminating atrocities of the Great Revolution. A high material civilisation does but arm the human brute with new instruments of his lust or his ferocity, unless it go hand in hand with a power that can penetrate his heart and mould his will.

Fifth Sunday after Trinity.

And Simon answering said unto Him, Master, we have toiled all the night, and have taken nothing: nevertheless at Thy word I will let down the net. And when they had this done, they inclosed a great multitude of fishes: and their net brake.—*St. Luke* v. 5, 6.

"THE live-long night we've toiled in vain,
But at Thy gracious word
I will let down the net again:—
Do Thou Thy will, O Lord!"

So spake the weary fisher, spent
With bootless darkling toil,
Yet on his Master's bidding bent
For love and not for spoil.

So day by day and week by week,
In sad and weary thought,
They muse, whom God hath set to seek
The souls His Christ hath bought.

For not upon a tranquil lake
Our pleasant task we ply,
Where all along our glistening wake
The softest moonbeams lie;

Where rippling wave and dashing oar
Our midnight chant attend,
Or whispering palm-leaves from the shore
With midnight silence blend.

Sweet thoughts of peace, ye may not last:
Too soon some ruder sound
Calls us from where ye soar so fast
Back to our earthly round.

For wildest storms our ocean sweep:
No anchor but the Cross
Might hold: and oft the thankless deep
Turns all our toil to loss.

Full many a dreary anxious hour
We watch our nets alone
In drenching spray, and driving shower,
And hear the night-bird's moan:

At morn we look, and nought is there;
Sad dawn of cheerless day!
Who then from pining and despair
The sickening heart can stay?

There is a stay—and we are strong;
Our Master is at hand,
To cheer our solitary song,
And guide us to the strand,

In His own time: but yet awhile
Our bark at sea must ride:
Cast after cast, by force or guile
All waters must be tried:

By blameless guile or gentle force,
As when He deigned to teach
(The lode-star of our Christian course)
Upon this sacred beach.

Should e'er Thy wonder-working grace
Triumph by our weak arm,
Let not our sinful fancy trace
Aught human in the charm:

To our own nets[1] ne'er bow we down,
Lest on the eternal shore
The angels, while our draught they own,[2]
Reject us evermore:

Or, if for our unworthiness,
Toil, prayer, and watching fail,
In disappointment Thou canst bless,
So love at heart prevail.

The Collect.

GRANT, O Lord, we beseech thee, that the course of this world may be so peaceably ordered by thy governance, that thy Church may joyfully serve thee in all godly quietness; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

SPECULATION AND ACTION MEET IN PRAYER.

It is in and by prayer that the two governing elements of religious life, thought, and work, alike find their strongest impulse and their point of unity. Such is our weakness that we constantly tend to a one-sided use of God's gifts. We are either exclusively speculative and contemplative on the one hand, or we are

[1] They sacrifice unto their net, and burn incense unto their drag.—*Habakkuk* i. 16.

[2] St. Matthew xiii. 49.

absorbingly practical and men of action on the other. Either exaggeration is fatal to the true life of religion, which binds the soul to God by faith as well as by love; by love not less than by faith: by a life of energetic service not less truly than by a life of communion with light and truth. It is in prayer that each element is at once quickened in itself, and balanced by the presence of the other. The great masters and teachers of Christian doctrine have always found in prayer their highest source of illumination.

THE LESSON OF SHILOH.

Let us note that no outward circumstances can of themselves protect us against the insidious assaults of evil or against the enfeeblement of mind. If Hophni and Phinehas could have led honest and pure lives anywhere, it surely would have been on the steps of the sanctuary at Shiloh; if anywhere Eli could have felt that family affections may be so displaced as to dishonour God, and that weakness in a ruler may be criminal, he would have felt it at a spot which was so charged with the memories of the heroes and saints of Israel; but, in truth, external advantages of this kind only help us when the will and the conscience are in a condition to be helped. Shiloh in its tragic desolation remains at this hour a monument of Eli's weakness and of his children's shame. . . . That once smiling valley is now as uncultivated and bleak as any parts of the Highlands of Scotland, with scanty ruins of what might have been a Christian Church; with a deserted mosque or two, a fountain once connected with the services of the tabernacle, a level piece of ground which certainly bears traces of the hand of man, and on which, it may be, the tabernacle once stood—these are all that

remain to recall its past history. Those hilly sides, once so fertile and productive, are now but rude ridges of limestone rock, here and there covered with a scanty vegetation; that plain, once filled with all that marked a centre of national religious life, is unvisited, unless it be now and then by some stray peasant or shepherd, or by the tents of the wandering Bedouins. . . . No outward things, no holy home, no sacred profession, no guidance of friends in the present, no saintly memories in the past can guard, still less invigorate us if, in the sanctuary of will, that conscience, that presence is absent, that voice unheard, which will alone suffice. Except the Lord build a house of the human character their labour is but lost that build it; except the Lord keep the fortress of the human soul the watchman waiteth in vain. Yet He who lived and died that we might live will not fail us if, in will and purpose, we are true to Him—true as men who know and own their weakness. "Try me, O God, and seek the ground of my heart; prove me and examine my thoughts. Look well if there be any way of wickedness in me, and lead me in the way everlasting."

Sixth Sunday after Trinity.

David said unto Nathan, I have sinned against the Lord. And Nathan said unto David, The Lord also hath put away thy sin; thou shalt not die.—2 *Samuel* xii. 13.

When bitter thoughts, of conscience born,
With sinners wake at morn,
When from our restless couch we start,
With fevered lips, and withered heart,
Where is the spell to charm those mists away,
And make new morning in that darksome day?
One draught of spring's delicious air,
One steadfast thought, that God is there.

These are Thy wonders, hourly wrought,[1]
Thou Lord of time and thought,
Lifting and lowering souls at will,
Crowding a world of good or ill
Into a moment's vision; e'en as light
Mounts o'er a cloudy ridge, and all is bright,
From west to east one thrilling ray
Turning a wintry world to May.

Wouldst thou the pangs of guilt assuage?
Lo! here an open page,
Where heavenly mercy shines as free,
Written in balm, sad heart, for thee.
Never so fast, in silent April shower,
Flushed into green the dry and leafless bower,[2]
As Israel's crownèd mourner felt
The dull hard stone within him melt.

The absolver saw the mighty grief,
And hastened with relief;—
"The Lord forgives; thou shalt not die:"—
'Twas gently spoke, yet heard on high,
And all the band of angels, used to sing
In heaven, according to his raptured string,
Who many a month had turned away
With veilèd eyes, nor owned his lay,

Now spread their wings, and throng around
To the glad mournful sound,
And welcome, with bright open face,
The broken heart to love's embrace.

[1] See Herbert's Poems, p. 160.

[2] And all this leafless and uncoloured scene
Shall flush into variety again.—*Cowper.*

The rock is smitten, and to future years
Springs ever fresh the tide of holy tears.[1]
And holy music, whispering peace
Till time and sin together cease.

There drink; and when ye are at rest,
With that free Spirit blest,[2]
Who to the contrite can dispense
The princely heart of innocence,
If ever, floating from faint earthly lyre,
Was wafted to your soul one high desire,
By all the trembling hope ye feel,
Think on the minstrel as ye kneel:

Think on the shame, that dreadful hour
When tears shall have no power,
Should his own lay the accuser prove,
Cold while he kindled others' love:
And let your prayers for Charity arise,
That his own heart may hear his melodies,
And a true voice to him may cry,
'Thy God forgives—thou shalt not die."

The Collect.

O God, who hast prepared for them that love thee such good things as pass man's understanding; Pour into our hearts such love toward thee, that we, loving thee above all things, may obtain thy promises, which exceed all that we can desire; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

[1] The fifty-first Psalm.

[2] Psalm li. 12: "Uphold me with Thy *free* Spirit." The original word seems to mean "ingenuous, princely, noble." Read Bishop Horne's Paraphrase on the verse.

OUR REFUGE.

"Lord, Thou hast been our refuge from one generation to another."—*Psalm* xc. 1 (Prayer-Book version).

This is, beyond fair doubt, the oldest psalm in the whole psalter. It is the work, not of David, but as the inscription tells us in the Bible version, of Moses. The contents of the psalm, closely examined, bear the inscription out. In this psalm we have the old language—many of the peculiar phrases—of the books of Moses, especially of Deuteronomy; besides which, the spirit of the psalm is the spirit of Moses, the man of God. Awe at God's goodness—the sense of man's insignificance—the deep insight into the meaning of God's chastisements—the pathetic sense of the shortness of man's average life—the passionate prayer for more light, more spiritual wisdom, in contemplating the work and the ways of God,—this is just what we might expect from Moses as we know him in his own books. Especially like Moses is the union of melancholy and fervour which meets us here—the fervour of the intrepid servant of God dashed by the melancholy which followed on his great disappointments. Do we not hear the voice of Israel's leader at the close of the long penal wanderings in the desert in the words—"We consume away in Thy displeasure, and are afraid at Thy wrathful indignation. Thou hast set our misdeeds before Thee, and our secret sins in the light of Thy countenance. For when Thou art angry all our days are gone: we bring our years to an end as a tale that is told." Is it not Moses who, almost within sight of Canaan, prays, "Comfort us again after the time Thou hast plagued us, and for the years in which we have suffered adversity"?—and then, in view of the divine sentence of exclusion from the promised land, checks himself,—"Show Thy servants Thy work, and their

children Thy glory." And are not the opening words of the psalm which are before us in the text just what we might expect from this mighty soul, turning away from the chequered scenes of a career full of triumph and full of failure—turning resolutely to the one eternal Being before whom all human things are poor and insignificant?—"Lord, Thou hast been our refuge from one generation to another. Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever the earth and the world were made, Thou art God from everlasting and world without end." Moses is not thinking of himself alone. He associates with himself all true servants of God around him. "Lord, Thou has been *our* refuge." He is not for the moment confined within the frontiers of Israel. God had been served in ages when Israel as yet was not. Upon all the earliest fathers of the human race whose names had or had not been preserved in the sacred books as servants of the Most High—upon all the lonely, hard, heroic lives which had been lived in those earliest days, true to the faint light of the earliest revelation—upon these, too, the lawgiver's thought is resting. Associated with them, not less than with the Israel of his own day, he places himself before the presence of his Maker—"Lord, Thou hast been our refuge from one generation to another." He is the spokesman and representative of all that is good and great in the past annals of mankind. He is speaking for the living: he is speaking also for the dead. And his words do not die with himself. One after another, the generations take them up, first in Israel, and then in Christendom. As the centuries pass, the chorus which repeats them is ever becoming more numerous—more varied. The spiritual experience which they represent is continually deeper and wider; and they are repeated at this moment by more souls in earth and

heaven than ever before—souls which have found in them the motto and the secret of life, whether in struggle or in victory,—"Lord, Thou hast been our refuge from one generation to another."

Many of us will remember this psalm in connection with some of the saddest and most solemn moments of our lives. It is one of the two psalms used in the order for the burial of the dead, and of the two we may dare to say it is the deepest. It pierces most completely to the inmost springs of human feeling: it unveils more of the meaning and awfulness of life and death. Then in those solemn moments which, sooner or later, await us all in this earthly pilgrimage,—then when we are committing to the dust the form which we have known and loved best on earth,—then when the accustomed trivialities which shroud from most of us, during so large a part of our existence, the real seriousness of life, have fallen away, and we stand face to face with its true conditions—then we probably are able to breathe a new force of meaning into the words, "Lord, Thou hast been our refuge from one generation to another."

"Our refuge." In the Bible version more accurately it is "our dwelling-place." God is the home of the soul of man. As Moses says in his blessing on collective Israel, "The eternal God is thy refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms"—words in which we find the twofold idea of protection and endearing welcome. No doubt a man's home is a refuge—a refuge from the wind and the rain—a refuge from the cares and conflicts of the outer world, from the hard words and deeds of other men. The inviolability of the home is the spirit of our English proverb that a man's house is his castle; and in this sense God is the home of the soul. The soul finds in the presence of God a protection against the

enemies which threaten it with ruin in the rough life of the outer world. In this sense David cries "I will love thee, O Lord, my strength. The Lord is my strong rock and my defence, my Saviour, the God of my might and in whom I will trust—my buckler, the horn also of my salvation and my refuge." Or again, "Be Thou my strong rock and house of defence, that Thou mayest save me. Thou art my strong rock and my castle." Or again, "Be Thou my stronghold whereunto I may alway resort. Thou hast promised to help me: Thou art my house of defence and my castle." Or again, "Whoso dwelleth under the defence of the Most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty." "I will say unto the Lord, Thou art my hope and my stronghold, my God, in Thee will I trust; for He shall deliver thee from the snare of the hunter and from the noisome pestilence. He shall defend thee under His wings; thou shall be safe under His feathers. His faithfulness and truth shall be thy shield and buckler." On the other hand, besides this idea of protection from evils without, the word suggests a place where care is thrown aside—where the affections expand themselves freely and fully—where loving looks and kindly words and gentle deeds are the order of the day. When God is said to be the refuge or the home of man, it is meant that God gives to man His best and tenderest welcome,—that God—God alone—is the Being in whom man finds perfect repose and satisfaction for all the faculties and sympathies of his nature,—that for man's higher or spiritual self the one eternal Being is what the fireside is for the domestic affections—a sphere in which man abandons himself to perfect enjoyment—to that easy, careless, joyous delight which comes with a sense of being among friends with whom no reserve is either necessary or possible.

Seventh Sunday after Trinity.

From whence can a man satisfy these men with bread here in the wilderness?—*St. Mark* viii. 4.

Go not away, thou weary soul:
Heaven has in store a precious dole
Here on Bethsaida's cold and darksome height,
Where over rocks and sands arise
Proud Sirion in the northern skies,
And Tabor's lonely peak, 'twixt thee and noon-day light.

And far below, Gennesaret's main
Spreads many a mile of liquid plain
(Though all seem gathered in one eager bound),
Then narrowing cleaves yon palmy lea,
Towards that deep sulphureous sea,
Where five proud cities lie, by one dire sentence drowned.

Landscape of fear! yet, weary heart,
Thou need'st not in thy gloom depart,
Nor fainting turn to seek thy distant home:
Sweetly thy sickening throbs are eyed
By the kind Saviour at thy side;
For healing and for balm e'en now thine hour is come.

No fiery wing is seen to glide,
No cates ambrosial are supplied,
But one poor fisher's rude and scanty store
Is all He asks (and more than needs)
Who men and angels daily feeds,
And stills the wailing sea-bird on the hungry shore.

The feast is o'er, the guests are gone,
And over all that upland lone
The breeze of eve sweeps wildly as of old—
But far unlike the former dreams,
The heart's sweet moonlight softly gleams
Upon life's varied view, so joyless erst and cold.

As mountain travellers in the night,
When heaven by fits is dark and bright,
Pause listening on the silent heath, and hear
Nor trampling hoof nor tinkling bell,
Then bolder scale the rugged fell,
Conscious the more of One, ne'er seen, yet ever near:

So when the tones of rapture gay
On the lorn ear die quite away,
The lonely world seems lifted nearer heaven;
Seen daily, yet unmarked before,
Earth's common paths are strewn all o'er
With flowers of pensive hope, the wreath of man forgiven.

The low sweet tones of Nature's lyre
No more on listless ears expire,
Nor vainly smiles along the shady way
The primrose in her vernal nest,
Nor unlamented sink to rest
Sweet roses one by one, nor autumn leaves decay.

There's not a star the Heaven can show,
There's not a cottage-hearth below,
But feeds with solace kind the willing soul—
Men love us, or they need our love;
Freely they own, or heedless prove
The curse of lawless hearts, the joy of self-control.

Then rouse thee from desponding sleep,
Nor by the wayside lingering weep,
Nor fear to seek Him farther in the wild,
Whose love can turn earth's worst and least
Into a conqueror's royal feast:
Thou wilt not be untrue, thou shalt not be beguiled.

The Collect.

LORD of all power and might, who art the author and giver of all good things; Graft in our hearts the love of thy Name, increase in us true religion, nourish us with all goodness, and of thy great mercy keep us in the same; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

PLAYING OR DOZING OUR LIFE AWAY.

It may be that, until now, we have gone through life like grown-up schoolboys, saying, doing just what we like, with no thought beyond each act, each word. It may be that we pride ourselves on being untrammelled by creeds, by scruples; on being, as we put it, "unconventional;" on understanding life chiefly as freedom—freedom to think, to say, to do what we like without let or hindrance. So we bound along the path of earthly existence in our boisterous, irrepressible spirits as if along that path no mistakes could possibly be made by any high-spirited traveller—as if that path led in the end to no place in particular; or we bound along as if engaged in a continuous frolic—as if existence were an immense, inexhaustible joke from beginning to end. And thus we pass from boyhood to manhood, and from ripe manhood to its decline, as if we had eyes and ears, and thought, and imagination, and sympathy ready for almost anything in the world except the one question,

"What is to be the end of it?" And here it is that the thought of the future account does sometimes act as a sudden, solemn check, not merely upon gross sin, but upon aimlessness, frivolity, lack of serious purpose in act and word. A voice comes to us in the dead of the night, or in some moment of enforced solitude, and it whispers, "This is all very well, but you have to give an account to God." So of old, said the preacher, the son of David, in Jerusalem: "Truly the light is sweet, and a pleasant thing it is for the eyes to behold the sun; but if a man live many years and rejoice in them all, yet let him remember the days of darkness. Rejoice, O young man, in thy youth, and let thy heart cheer thee in the days of thy youth, and walk in the ways of thine heart, and in the sight of thine eyes, but know that for all these things God will bring thee into judgment." So said the beloved apostle in his island prison: "I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God, and the books were opened. And another book was opened, which is the book of life, and the dead were judged out of the things which were written in the books according to their works." And if, when a man gets up in the morning, he would say to himself solemnly, "I shall have one day certainly to account for what I do, and say, and think this day;" and if, ere he lays him down at night, he would say to himself solemnly, out aloud, if necessary, "I shall have to account before God for what I have done, and said, and thought, and failed to think, and say, and do this day," he would find at the end of six months the truth of that saying of St. Augustine, "Nothing has contributed more powerfully to wean me from all that held me down to earth than the thought constantly dwelt on of death and of the last account."

And this resolution to give thought to the last account

would prove a useful stimulus. If some men seem to regard life as a playground, others treat it as a sleeping-room. They use it, with all its vast opportunities, as a something that is only to be dozed away. They shrink from its demands on their exertions—from the repeated calls to do something for God's glory, something for the benefit of others, something for true self-improvement, as if these invitations were merely the importunate voice of an undeserving beggar, or the ravings of a fanatic. They are indolent at twenty. They say that when they are thirty they will be active men—men of prayer, men of work, men of resolution and sacrifice; but thirty comes and finds them, if I may say so, still in bed, with just those companions around them who assure them that they will be in time to make a fair use of life if they are up and doing at forty. The years soon pass, and forty is upon them, and still they are where and what they were. They are still alive to the necessity of some effort, but a man—so they say—is not old at forty; and, meanwhile, "a little more sleep; a little more slumber: a little more folding of the hands to sleep;" and so they reach fifty or sixty, when youth has fairly passed, and habit has stiffened around them, and it is too late to rise. If anything can save them, surely it is the overwhelming thought of the account which they must give; the account of all that they have received—strength, intellect, it may be, income, time, friends, God's grace, good thoughts and impulses, bright visions of usefulness and happiness, repeated discontent with self, only to be wasted—only to be thrown aside as if they had never been received at all. "Awake, thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light"—the light of His wisdom, streaming from the words that are written in His Gospel shining

on thy soul; the light of His love shining from the cross on which He died for thee; the light of His justice as, to the anticipations of faith, He appears in the clouds of heaven coming to judge the quick and the dead. This may yet save thee ere it be too late.

Eighth Sunday after Trinity.

It is the man of God who was disobedient unto the word of the Lord.—1 *Kings* xii. 26.

PROPHET of God, arise and take
With thee the words of wrath divine,
The scourge of Heaven to shake
O'er yon apostate shrine.

Where Angels down the lucid stair
Came hovering to our sainted sires,
Now, in the twilight, glare
The heathen's wizard fires.

Go, with thy voice the altar rend,
Scatter the ashes, be the arm,
That idols would befriend,
Shrunk at thy withering charm.

Then turn thee, for thy time is short,
But trace not o'er the former way,
Lest idol pleasures court
Thy heedless soul astray.

Thou know'st how hard to hurry by,
Where on the lonely woodland road
Beneath the moonlight sky
The festal warblings flowed;

Where maidens to the Queen of Heaven
Wove the gay dance round oak or palm,
Or breathed their vows at even
In hymns as soft as balm.

Or thee, perchance, a darker spell
Enthralls: the smooth stones of the flood,[1]
By mountain grot or fell,
Pollute with infant's blood;

The giant altar on the rock,
The cavern whence the timbrel's call
Affrights the wandering flock:
Thou long'st to search them all.

Trust not the dangerous path again—
O forward step and lingering will!
O loved and warned in vain!
And wilt thou perish still?

Thy message given, thine home in sight,
To the forbidden feast return?
Yield to the false delight
Thy better soul could spurn?

Alas, my brother! round thy tomb
In sorrow kneeling, and in fear,
We read the Pastor's doom
Who speaks and will not hear.

The grey-haired saint may fail at last,
The surest guide a wanderer prove;
Death only binds us fast
To the bright shore of love.

[1] Among the smooth stones of the stream is thy portion; they, they are thy lot.—*Isaiah* lvii. 6.

The Collect.

O GOD, whose never-failing providence ordereth all things both in heaven and earth; We humbly beseech thee to put away from us all hurtful things, and to give us those things which be profitable for us; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

EACH SOUL A BATTLEFIELD.

Each soul is a battlefield in which Christ and the world are trying their issues. Twice, especially in the spiritual life, does the world make a vast effort to exclude or dethrone Him—at the period of conversion from sin, and at the period when the soul is moved to dedicate itself perfectly to the service of God. Can we wonder if, when self-knowledge has been awakened, and anxiety aroused, and the wings of the dove seem to unfold within —that the world should hasten to lay its cold, damp hand upon the spark of fire that has fallen from heaven, and desire to crush out, as it were, that budding effort of life? Can we wonder if it tells the convert that the five yokes of oxen, the field, the newly-married wife, have a first claim—if it whispers to Demas that the pleasures of Thessalonica are better than the hard prison fare of the Apostle at Rome? Do we long for higher, holier, purer life, for self-denial, for more power of doing good in our generation, for more strict examination of the conscience, let us beware of the whisper of the world's prudence, "What will others say?" "These things are unnecessary; you are enthusiastic, visionary, you had better delay, you must not act precipitately." Yes, retire and face the truth. Meet the world's enchantment by a counter enchantment—the world's fascination by a counter fascination? Look at Christ's truth, at His compassion, at

His love. What has the world to offer that can balance these? I grant that it is confident—that it promises well, but it is like a magnificent robe, coloured and patterned without, but jagged and rough, and colourless within. It invites you, like mine host at the door of an inn, to enter and make yourself comfortable, and stay as long as you will. You trust its smiles, you accept its hospitality, and at length it changes its tone, and makes up its account, and asks for payment. It demands your soul. Your soul, and for what? For pleasure, for reputation, for wealth, for nothing that lasts, for nothing that can possibly survive the grave. The grave after all is a true prophet, a true witness for Christ. Whether it be the grave of the statesman or of the peasant — it is an honest friend, who will tell us the simple truth. As we look down into that last home of all human sorrow and joy, and success and failure, and insignificance and greatness, we master a great truth. We learn how certainly all that is in the world that attracts, which enslaves, which wearies or pains the sons of men, is sure to pass away. The world passeth away and the lust thereof, but its Conqueror remains, for ever the same in His glory, in His brightness, in His purity. And "This the victory that overcometh the world" in our spiritual experience, "even our faith." By this strong true faith we cling to Him in His Divine and Human natures, in His world-embracing redemption, in His perpetual intercessions, in the strength of His sacramental life, in the perfection and beauty of His human character. Children who have been left to nurses in their earliest years are said, in those early years, often to prefer their nurses to their mothers, but are certain afterwards to be won back by the true natural, glowing, genuine love of a mother's heart. It may be that some

who hear me have, for many a year, loved the world. Return, then, brethren, I would beseech you, to your mother—the Church of Christ,—to your true parent, God, —to your true country, heaven. Christ's resurrection victory is an earnest of your power to do so. Here is the warrant for your exertion, the earnest of your triumph, the motive for your joy. In His victory you have the principle of your own. That He may relieve your despondency, that He may nerve your wills, that He may save your souls, He leaves you the encouragement, the strength, the blessing of these precious, never-dying words, "Be of good cheer, I have overcome the world."

Ninth Sunday after Trinity.

And after the earthquake a fire; but the Lord was not in the fire: and after the fire a still small voice.—1 *Kings* xix. 12.

In troublous days of anguish and rebuke,
While sadly round them Israel's children look,
And their eyes fail for waiting on their Lord:
While underneath each awful arch of green,
On every mountain-top, God's chosen scene
Of pure heart-worship, Baal is adored:

'Tis well, true hearts should for a time retire
To holy ground, in quiet to aspire
Towards promised regions of serener grace;
On Horeb, with Elijah, let us lie,
Where all around on mountain, sand, and sky,
God's chariot-wheels have left distinctest trace:

There, if in jealousy and strong disdain
We to the sinner's God of sin complain,
Untimely seeking here the peace of Heaven—

"It is enough, O Lord! now let me die
E'en as my father's did: for what am I
That I should stand, where they have vainly striven?"—

Perhaps our God may of our conscience ask,
"What doest thou here, frail wanderer from thy task?
Where hast thou left those few sheep in the wild?"[1]
Then should we plead our heart's consuming pain,
At sight of ruined altars, prophets slain,
And God's own ark with blood of souls defiled;

He on the rock may bid us stand, and see
The outskirts of His march of mystery,
His endless warfare with man's wilful heart;
First, His great power He to the sinner shows,
Lo! at His angry blast the rocks unclose,
And to their base the trembling mountains part:

Yet the Lord is not here: 'tis not by Power
He will be known—but darker tempests lower;
Still, sullen heavings vex the labouring ground:
Perhaps His Presence through all depth and height,
Best of all gems, that deck His crown of light,
The haughty eye may dazzle and confound.

God is not in the earthquake; but behold
From Sinai's caves are bursting, as of old,
The flames of His consuming jealous ire.
Woe to the sinner, should stern Justice prove
His chosen attribute; but He in love
Hastes to proclaim, "God is not in the fire."

The storm is o'er—and hark! a still small voice
Steals on the ear, to say Jehovah's choice
Is ever with the soft, meek, tender soul:

[1] 1 Samuel xvii. 28.

By soft, meek, tender ways He loves to draw
The sinner, startled by His ways of awe:
Here is our Lord, and not where thunders roll.

Back then, complainer; loathe thy life no more,
Nor deem thyself upon a desert shore,
Because the rocks the nearer prospect close.
Yet in fallen Israel are there hearts and eyes
That day by day in prayer like thine arise:
Thou know'st them not, but their Creator knows.

Go, to the world return, nor fear to cast
Thy bread upon the waters, sure at last[1]
In joy to find it after many days.
The work be thine, the fruit thy children's part:
Choose to believe, not see: sight tempts the heart
From sober walking in true Gospel ways.

The Collect.

GRANT to us, Lord, we beseech thee, the spirit to think and do always such things as be rightful; that we, who cannot do anything that is good without thee, may by thee be enabled to live according to thy will; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

RELIGIOUS PERPLEXITY—THE PRACTICE OF MEDITATION.

There are many men who, if they were asked what is the leading characteristic of religion, would answer, "The perplexities which surround it." To them it appears to be, beyond any other subject, uncertain. They do not reject, but neither do they admit its claims. They pass weeks, months, years, in an attitude of indecision; and too often they end their lives by dying undecided. Re-

[1] Ecclesiastes xi. 1.

ligion is, of course, only of value to those who heartily accept its claims; and the question arises, Why do men of this kind thus forfeit its assistance and its blessings? It may be replied that Christendom is so divided that they do not know what to believe. Very well, let them begin by believing all the truths on which Christendom, with all its divisions, is agreed; to believe these truths, and act on the belief, will soon carry them further. May it not be that their perplexity is due, at least in part, to a want of serious purpose in examining the claims and substance of religion at all? Who has not felt on an August day, when a wide landscape lies stretched out under the rays of a summer sun, how at first everything seems to be indistinct and blurred; and then, as the spectator steadily and intensely gazes, outline and form gradually emerge from the haze,—here appears a hill, there a wood, yonder a river, then a church tower, and a mansion, and the houses of the cottagers nestling among the trees? Five minutes ago all seemed misty and indefinite; only let the eye resolutely scan it, and the harmonies as well as the features of the prospect become clear, and all doubts as to its range, and beauty, and characteristics are at an end. In many cases—I do not say in all—religion is only perplexing because it is never examined closely; because men look at it only as a sort of byplay, in the spare moments of a busy life, and assume too hastily that it is unsubstantial, when its reality does not flash forth irresistibly upon their inert intelligence. They must handle it if they would see that it has the flesh and bones, which distinguish a creed that has come from heaven from the creation of the fancy or of the fears of men.

And this may lead us to consider one practice in particular by which our Lord's command may be obeyed in

its spirit and drift—I mean meditation. The Bible says a great deal about meditation, that is, the fixing the mind steadily on some one religious truth or fact, with a view to extracting from it all the meaning and guidance that we possibly can. Many Christians who say their prayers regularly never meditate. The very word seems to them rather to belong to religious phraseology, than to describe anything actual and practical in a Christian's life. Yet they little know how much they lose, especially with reference to the life of our Lord and Saviour, by neglecting this most healthful and fruitful exercise. You say you do not know how to set about it. Very well, then, try something of this kind. After saying your morning prayers, open a New Testament, and ask God to enable you to realise His presence, and to send His Holy Spirit to enlighten and guide you. Then read two or three verses, or a short paragraph, a miracle, a parable, a part of a discourse, as the case may be. Do not think of its grammatical, or historical, or literary aspects; but say, "What do these words say to me? What truth do they teach? What fault do they correct? What effort do they prescribe or encourage? What resolutions do they make necessary?" If earnest, you will soon see your way. Scripture is so full of meanings that the real difficulty is which to select out of its abundance. Then, having decided on the main lessons of the passage, pray earnestly that you may practically remember them, and turn them in whatever way to the best account. The whole exercise need not take up more than ten minutes; but, at the end of a year, it will, if regularly practised, have made a great difference in matters which most intimately concern the soul. It is one way of so handling the Gospel history as to become convinced of its truth from perceiving its intimate

sympathy with and adaptation to our own case. Instead of a vague, half-remembered, less than half-comprehended story, the life of Jesus, steadily meditated on, passes into the life of the Christian by an insensible but real transfusion.

Tenth Sunday after Trinity.

And when He was come near, He beheld the city, and wept over it.
—*St. Luke* xix. 41.

WHY doth my Saviour weep
At sight of Sion's bowers?
Shows it not fair from yonder steep,
Her gorgeous crown of towers?
Mark well His holy pains:
'Tis not in pride or scorn,
That Israel's King with sorrow stains
His own triumphal morn.

It is not that His soul
Is wandering sadly on,
In thought how soon at death's dark goal
Their course will all be run,
Who now are shouting round
Hosanna to their chief;
No thought like this in Him is found,
This were a Conqueror's grief.[1]

Or doth He feel the Cross
Already in His heart,
The pain, the shame, the scorn, the loss?
Feel e'en His God depart?

[1] Compare Herod. vii 46.

No: though He knew full well
The grief that then shall be—
The grief that Angels cannot tell—
Our God in agony.

It is not thus He mourns;
Such might be martyr's tears,
When his last lingering look he turns
On human hopes and fears;
But hero ne'er or saint
The secret load might know,
With which His spirit waxeth faint;
His is a Saviour's woe.

"If thou hadst known, e'en thou,
At least in this thy day,
The message of thy peace! but now
'Tis passed for aye away:
Now foes shall trench thee round,
And lay thee even with earth,
And dash thy children to the ground,
Thy glory and thy mirth."

And doth the Saviour weep
Over His people's sin,
Because we will not let Him keep
The souls He died to win?
Ye hearts that love the Lord,
If at this sight ye burn,
See that in thought, in deed, in word,
Ye hate what made Him mourn.

The Collect.

LET thy merciful ears, O Lord, be open to the prayers of thy humble servants; and that they may obtain their petitions make them to ask such things as shall please thee; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

THE DIGNITY OF PRAYER.

The dignity of prayer as real work becomes clear to us if we reflect on the faculties which it employs. This will be made clearer still if we consider the effect of all sincere prayer upon the habitual atmosphere of the soul. Prayer places the soul face to face with facts of the first order of solemnity and importance; with its real self, and with its God. And, just as art, or study, or labour in any department is elevating when it takes us out of and beyond the petty range of daily and perhaps material interest, yet while it quickens interest in them by kindling higher enthusiasms into life, so in a peculiar and transcendent sense it is with prayer. Prayer is man's inmost movement towards a higher power; but what is the intellectual view or apprehension of himself that originally impels him to move? Under what aspect does man appear to himself in prayer? It is the mystery which lies enclosed within each one of us, the mystery which is yet a fact,—of an undying personality. It is that which each human speaker describes as "I." It is that of which each of us is conscious as no one else can be conscious. Its existence is not proved to us by a demonstration, since we apprehend it as immediately obvious. Its certainty can be shaken by no sophistical or destructive argument, since our conviction of its reality is based upon a continuous act of primary conception. No sooner do we withdraw ourselves from the importunities of sense, from the wanderings of imagination, from the misleading phrases which confuse the mental sight, than we find ourselves face to face with this fact, represented by "I." For it is neither the body which the real sense may ignore, nor a pas-

sionate impulse which the real self may conquer, nor even that understanding which, close as it is to the real self, is yet distinct from it. The body may be in its decrepitude; the flames of passion may have died away; the understanding may be almost in its dotage; yet the inward, self-possessed, self-governing being may remain untouched, realising itself in struggling against the instincts of bodily weakness, and in crushing out some embers which survive the fires of extinct passions. Now it is this self, conscious of its greatness, conscious of its weakness, which is the real agent in prayer. In its oppressive sense of solitude, even in the midst of multitudes, this self longs to go forth and to commune with the Father of spirits, who gave it life. This real self it is which apprehends God with the understanding, which embraces Him with the affections, which resolves through the will to obey Him; and thus does it underlie and unite the complex elements of prayer, so that in true, heartfelt prayer we become so conscious of its vitality and power. It is in prayer especially that we cease to live, as it were, in a single faculty, or on the surface of our being; it is in prayer that we cease to regard ourselves as animal forms, or as social powers, or as family characters, and look hard, for the time being, at ourselves, as being what we really are; that is to say, as immortal spirits, outwardly draped in social forms and proprieties, and linked to a body of flesh and blood, but in our conscious spiritual solitude looking steadily upwards at the Face of God, and straining our eyes onwards towards the great Eternity which lies before us.

Eleventh Sunday after Trinity.

Is it a time to receive money, and to receive garments, and oliveyards, and vineyards, and sheep, and oxen, and menservants, and maidservants?—2 *Kings* v. 26.

Is this a time to plant and build,
Add house to house, and field to field,
When round our walls the battle lowers,
When mines are hid beneath our towers,
And watchful foes are stealing round
To search and spoil the holy ground?

Is this a time for moonlight dreams
Of love and home by mazy streams,
For Fancy with her shadowy toys,
Aërial hopes and pensive joys,
While souls are wandering far and wide,
And curses swarm on every side?

No—rather steel thy melting heart
To act the martyr's sternest part,
To watch, with firm unshrinking eye,
Thy darling visions as they die,
Till all bright hopes, and hues of day,
Have faded into twilight gray.

Yes—let them pass without a sigh,
And if the world seem dull and dry,
If long and sad thy lonely hours,
And winds have rent thy sheltering bowers,
Bethink thee what thou art and where,
A sinner in a life of care.

The fire of God is soon to fall
(Thou know'st it) on this earthly ball;

Full many a soul, the price of blood,
Marked by the Almighty's hand for good,
To utter death that hour shall sweep—
And will the Saints in Heaven dare weep?

Then in His wrath shall God uproot
The trees He set, for lack of fruit,
And drown in rude tempestuous blaze
The towers His hand had deigned to raise;
In silence, ere that storm begin,
Count o'er His mercies and thy sin.

Pray only that thine aching heart,
From vision's vain content to part,
Strong for Love's sake its woe to hide
May cheerful wait the Cross beside,
Too happy if, that dreadful day,
Thy life be given thee for a prey.[1]

Snatched sudden from th' avenging rod,
Safe in the bosom of thy God,
How wilt thou then look back, and smile
On thoughts that bitterest seemed erewhile,
And bless the pangs that made thee see
This was no world of rest for thee!

The Collect.

O God, who declarest thy Almighty power most chiefly in shewing mercy and pity; Mercifully grant unto us such a

[1] The Lord said thus, Behold, that which I have built will I break down, and that which I have planted I will pluck up, even this whole land. And seekest thou great things for thyself? seek them not: for, behold, I will bring evil upon all flesh, saith the Lord: but thy life will I give unto thee for a prey in all places whither thou goest.—*Jeremiah* xlv. 4, 5.

measure of thy grace, that we, running the way of thy commandments, may obtain thy gracious promises, and be made partakers of thy heavenly treasure; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

FAITH'S CONQUEST OF THE WORLD.

Is the world-temper to be overcome by mental cultivation?

We live in days when language is used about education and literature as if of themselves they had an elevating and transforming power in human life. In combination with other and higher influences, mental cultivation does much for man. It softens his manners; it tames his natural ferocity. It refines and stimulates his understanding, his taste, his imagination. But it has no necessary power of purifying his affections, or of guiding or invigorating his will. In these respects it leaves him as it finds him. And if he is bound heart and soul to the material aspects of this present life, it will not help him to break his bonds. No doubt there are fine things in great writers about the unsubstantial and fugitive character of this life and its enjoyments. But we read; we admire; we assent; and we pass on; perhaps, with the observation that it is a striking passage. The illusion that there is a sort of moral or even sacramental force in literary pursuits would never be cherished by any who have considered the history of literature; when St. John wrote, it could hardly be said to be possessed by them at all. Had Christians been dependent on their cultivation in St. John's days, they would certainly have had a poorer chance of conquering the world than had the Stoics, who were, some of them, very polished and cultured indeed.

Is the world, then, to be overcome by sorrow, by failure, by disappointment; in a word, by the rude teaching of experience?

Sorrow and failure are no doubt to many men a revelation. They show that the material scene in which we pass our days is itself passing. They rouse into activity from the depths of our souls deep currents of feeling; and we may easily mistake feeling for something which it is not. Feeling is not faith; it sees nothing beyond the veil. Feeling is not practice; it may sweep the soul in gusts before it, yet commit us to nothing. Feeling deplores when it does not resist; it admires and approves of enterprises which it never attempts. Consequently, self-exhausted, in time, it dies back; leaving the soul worse off than it would be if it had never felt so strongly; worse off, because at once weaker and less sensitive than before. It is piteous to think how many a disappointment, many a failure, many a sorrow, ends like this. If illuminated by faith, it might have raised the sufferer from earth to heaven; but has left him an enfeebled cynic, who has indeed found out much about the world that he knew not before, but who is much less able than he was before to overcome it.

Twelfth Sunday after Trinity.

And looking up to Heaven, He sighed, and said unto him, Ephphatha, that is, Be opened.—*St. Mark* vii. 34.

THE Son of God in doing good
Was fain to look to Heaven and sigh:
And shall the heirs of sinful blood
Seek joy unmixed in charity?

God will not let Love's work impart
Full solace, lest it steal the heart;
Be thou content in tears to sow,
Blessing, like Jesus, in thy woe:

He looked to Heaven, and sadly sighed—
What saw my gracious Saviour there,
With fear and anguish to divide
The joy of Heaven-accepted prayer?
So o'er the bed where Lazarus slept
He to His Father groaned and wept:
What saw He mournful in that grave,
Knowing Himself so strong to save?

O'erwhelming thoughts of pain and grief
Over His sinking spirit sweep;—
"What boots it gathering one lost leaf
Out of yon sere and withered heap,
Where souls and bodies, hopes and joys,
All that earth owns or sin destroys,
Under the spurning hoof are cast,
Or tossing in th' autumal blast?"

The deaf may hear the Saviour's voice,
The fettered tongue its chain may break;
But the deaf heart, the dumb by choice,
The laggard soul, that will not wake,
The guilt that scorns to be forgiven;—
These baffle e'en the spells of Heaven;
In thought of these, His brows benign
Not e'en in healing cloudless shine.

No eye but His might ever bear
To gaze all down that drear abyss,
Because none ever saw so clear
The shore beyond of endless bliss:

The giddy waves so restless hurled,
The vexed pulse of this feverish world,
He views and counts with steady sight,
Used to behold the infinite.

But that in such communion high
He hath a fount of strength within,
Sure His meek heart would break and die,
O'erburthened by His brethren's sin;
Weak eyes on darkness dare not gaze,
It dazzles like the noon-day blaze;
But He who sees God's face may brook
On the true face of Sin to look.

What then shall wretched sinners do,
When in their last, their hopeless day,
Sin, as it is, shall meet their view,
God turn His face for aye away?
Lord, by Thy sad and earnest eye,
When Thou didst look to Heaven and sigh;
Thy voice, that with a word could chase
The dumb, deaf spirit from his place;

As Thou hast touched our ears, and taught
Our tongues to speak Thy praises plain,
Quell Thou each thankless, godless thought
That would make fast our bonds again.
From worldly strife, from mirth unblest,
Drowning Thy music in the breast,
From foul reproach, from thrilling fears,
Preserve, good Lord, Thy servants' ears.

From idle words, that restless throng
And haunt our hearts when we would pray,
From Pride's false chime, and jarring wrong,
Seal Thou my lips, and guard the way:

For Thou hast sworn, that every ear,
Willing or loth, Thy trump shall hear,
And every tongue unchainèd be,
To own no hope, no God, but Thee.

The Collect.

ALMIGHTY and everlasting God, who art always more ready to hear than we to pray, and art wont to give more than either we desire, or deserve; Pour down upon us the abundance of thy mercy; forgiving us those things whereof our conscience is afraid, and giving us those good things which we are not worthy to ask, but through the merits and mediation of Jesus Christ, thy Son, our Lord. *Amen.*

THE GRACE OF HUMILITY.

When we honestly consider the conditions of this life, so feeble, so frail, so short; when we feel the pressure of that sense of sin which, like pain in the body, is the proof and safeguard of surviving or reviving life in the soul, it might seem easy to be always and perfectly humble. But he who knows his own heart knows that, as pride was the first sin which sullied the moral world, so it is commonly the last which is violently expelled from the soul of a regenerate Christian. There are virtues of the natural order, such as justice, temperance, courage, prudence, which we may be led to cultivate by simply ascertaining what is socially or materially the best for ourselves. It was, indeed, thus that those virtues were cultivated of old by our pagan forefathers. But if we would be really humble, we must be students in the school and worshippers in the Church of Jesus Christ; since humility is a grace which, in its higher forms, He alone creates in the human soul.

Thirteenth Sunday after Trinity.

And He turned Him unto His disciples, and said privately, Blessed are the eyes which see the things that ye see: for I tell you, that many prophets and kings have desired to see those things which ye see, and have not seen them: and to hear those things which ye hear, and have not heard them.—*St. Luke* x. 23, 24.

On Sinai's top, in prayer and trance,
Full forty nights and forty days
The Prophet watched for one dear glance
Of Thee and of Thy ways:

Fasting he watched and all alone,
Wrapt in a still, dark, solid cloud,
The curtain of the Holy One
Drawn round him like a shroud:

So, separate from the world, his breast
Might duly take and strongly keep
The print of Heaven, to be expressed
Ere long on Sion's steep.[1]

There one by one his spirit saw
Of things divine the shadows bright,
The pageant of God's perfect law;
Yet felt not full delight.

Through gold and gems, a dazzling maze,
From veil to veil the vision led,
And ended, where unearthly rays
From o'er the ark were shed.

Yet not that gorgeous place, nor aught
Of human or angelic frame,

[1] See that thou make all things according to the pattern shewed to thee in the mount.—*Hebrews* viii. 5.

Could half appease his craving thought;
The void was still the same.

"Shew me Thy glory, gracious Lord!
'Tis Thee," he cries, "not Thine, I seek."[1]
Nay, start not at so bold a word
From man, frail worm and weak:

The spark of his first deathless fire
Yet buoys him up, and high above
The holiest creature, dares aspire
To the Creator's love.

The eye in smiles may wander round,
Caught by earth's shadows as they fleet;
But for the soul no help is found,
Save Him who made it, meet.

Spite of yourselves, ye witness this,[2]
Who blindly self or sense adore;
Else wherefore leaving your own bliss
Still restless ask ye more?

This witness bore the saints of old
When highest rapt and favoured most,
Still seeking precious things untold,
Not in fruition lost.

Canaan was theirs, and in it all
The proudest hope of kings dare claim:
Sion was theirs; and at their call
Fire from Jehovah came.

Yet monarchs walked as pilgrims still
In their own land, earth's pride and grace;
And seers would mourn on Sion's hill
Their Lord's averted face.

[1] Exodus xxxiii. 18. [2] Pensées de Pascal, part 1, art. viii.

Vainly they tried the deeps to sound
E'en of their own prophetic thought,
When of Christ crucified and crowned
His Spirit in them taught:

But He their aching gaze repressed
Which sought behind the veil to see,
For not without us fully blessed [1]
Or perfect might they be.

The rays of the Almighty's face
No sinner's eye might then receive;
Only the meekest man found grace [2]
To see His skirts and live.

But we as in a glass espy
The glory of His countenance,
Not in a whirlwind hurrying by
The too presumptuous glance,

But with mild radiance every hour,
From our dear Saviour's face benign
Bent on us with transforming power,
Till we, too, faintly shine.

Sprinkled with His atoning blood,
Safely before our God we stand,
As on the rock the Prophet stood,
Beneath His shadowing hand.—

Blessed eyes, which see the things we see!
And yet this tree of life hath proved
To many a soul a poison-tree,
Beheld, and not beloved.

[1] That they without us should not be made perfect.—*Hebrews* xi. 40.
[2] Exodus xxxiii. 20–23.

So like an angel's is our bliss
(Oh! thought to comfort and appal),
It needs must bring, if used amiss,
An angel's hopeless fall.

The Collect.

ALMIGHTY and merciful God, of whose only gift it cometh that thy faithful people do unto thee true and laudable service; Grant, we beseech thee, that we may so faithfully serve thee in this life, that we fail not finally to attain thy heavenly promises; through the merits of Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

THE ADEQUACY OF PRESENT OPPORTUNITIES.

We have many of us, it may be, in our time, had before our minds visions of doing splendid deeds of benevolence,—visions which belonged not to our actual means or circumstances, but to those of others, or to a fancy world. We have said to ourselves, "If I had the fortune of such and such a nobleman at my command, and if such and such a catastrophe were only to occur, how I should delight at laying out a hundred thousand pounds or half a million of money for the relief, the pure relief, of human suffering." Oh, admirable aspiration! But the worst of it is that the occasion and the means of meeting it are alike hypothetical; and this purely hypothetical benevolence is like a certain sort of novel, it taxes our sympathy without resulting in any real good either to our own characters or to other people. Do not let us wait to do what good we can till some one comes from the dead: do not let us wait till our circumstances change. Ere they change all may have ended with us in this life of probation.

Fourteenth Sunday after Trinity.

And Jesus answering said, Were there not ten cleansed? but where are the nine? There are not found that returned to give glory to God, save this stranger.—*St. Luke* xvii. 17, 18.

TEN cleansed, and only one remain!
Who would have thought our nature's stain
Was dyed so foul, so deep in grain?
Even He who reads the heart,—
Knows what He gave and what we lost,
Sin's forfeit, and redemption's cost,—
By a short pang of wonder crossed
Seems at the sight to start:

Yet 'twas not wonder, but His love
Our wavering spirits would reprove,
That heavenward seems so free to move
When earth can yield no more:
Then from afar on God we cry;
But should the mist of woe roll by,
Not showers across an April sky
Drift, when the storm is o'er

Faster than those false drops and few
Fleet from the heart, a worthless dew.
What sadder scene can angels view
Than self-deceiving tears,
Poured idly over some dark page
Of earlier life, though pride or rage
The record of to-day engage,
A woe for future years?

Spirits, that round the sick man's bed
Watched, noting down each prayer he made,
Were your unerring roll displayed,
His pride of health to abase;

Or, when soft showers in season fall
Answering a famished nation's call,
Should unseen fingers on the wall
Our vows forgotten trace;

How should we gaze in trance of fear!
Yet shines the light as thrilling clear
From Heaven upon that scroll severe,
"Ten cleansed and one remain!"
Nor surer would the blessing prove
Of humbled hearts that own Thy love,
Should choral welcome from above
Visit our senses plain;

Than by Thy placid voice and brow,
With healing first, with comfort now,
Turned upon him who hastes to bow
Before Thee, heart and knee;
"Oh! thou, who only wouldst be blest,
On thee alone My blessing rest!
Rise, go thy way in peace, possessed
For evermore of Me."

The Collect.

ALMIGHTY and everlasting God, give unto us the increase of faith, hope, and charity; and, that we may obtain that which thou dost promise, make us to love that which thou dost command; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

"WHERE ARE THE NINE?"

He who knew what was in man, and who had already tasted so much of human ingratitude, could not have been surprised at the conduct of the nine lepers. But

He calls attention to it as having, like His own merciful act itself, a typical value. The averages of gratitude and ingratitude among men do not vary much from age to age; and what here took place on a small scale would reappear, He knew full well, again and again in the history of Christendom and of the world. Of Christians it is probably true at this moment—literally true—that about ten per cent. are grateful to God for His mercies in nature and in grace, and ninety per cent. are more or less conspicuously wanting in anything that can be properly termed gratitude. And if this, or anything like it, be the true state of the case, it is a fact which certainly deserves attentive consideration; for want of gratitude towards Jesus Christ on the part of a Christian seems, at first sight, quite inexplicable, for gratitude is a natural virtue. Man is capable of gratitude, even in some of its highest forms, without the grace of Christ at all. Plato could thank the gods that he was a man first, then a Greek, then an Athenian; last, that he had been born in the age of Socrates. Seneca could write to his benefactor—"I know that I cannot adequately thank you, but I shall not cease to say that I cannot." Not merely civilised, but barbarous human nature is capable of the courtesies and of the self-sacrifice of true gratitude. And for us Christians how overwhelming are the motives to gratitude! The number, the magnificence, the practical value of the blessings which we receive from God, through Jesus Christ our Lord, conspire, with our sense of His love and His generosity, to make gratitude, one would think, strictly inevitable. And yet, as if anticipating what would be the real state of the case, Scripture insists, with great copiousness and fervour, upon what might have been, we should have thought, taken for granted. "When ye have eaten and are full," says Moses, "ye

bless the Lord your God." "What shall I render to the Lord," says David, "for all the benefits that He hath done unto me? I will receive the cup of salvation, and will call upon the name of the Lord." "In everything give thanks," says St. Paul, "for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you." "Whatsoever ye Colossians do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by Him." "Be careful, you Philippians, for nothing; but in everything, by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known unto God." "Let the peace of God dwell in your hearts, and be ye thankful." "I exhort, therefore, that first of all," he writes to Timothy, "supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks be made for all men." These are but a few of the passages which might be quoted, and their number shows how much, in the mind and judgment of the Holy Spirit, such precepts would be needed in the days to come. Whether they are needed or not, my brethren, is a question for your consciences and for mine—a question on which it does not seem necessary to enter at very great length.

Of the unthankfulness which so seriously depresses and blights our whole modern Christian life, one reason, in many cases, is that we do not see our great Benefactor. I do not forget that some of us may feel true gratitude to those human friends who have been kind to us in past years, and who are now out of sight. But take men in the mass, and it is quite otherwise. Little by little, as the years pass, too many of us forget the benefits that we owe to the dead. The pressure, the importunity, of the present and of the seen makes us overlook the great debt of thought and love which we owe to the past and the unseen. There is a cynical proverb—one of those

proverbs in which our poor human nature passes such stern judgment upon itself—"Out of sight, out of mind."

In the miracle before us, you will remember, the lepers were still uncleansed when they left our Lord that, in obedience to His command, they might show themselves to the priests. When the miracle was wrought upon them, the Worker was out of sight. He would have walked on towards the village; and they, avoiding the village in obedience to the law, were pursuing their way towards Jerusalem. Yes, at that moment of awe and blessing they did not see Him. No shadowy form hovered around them to remind them that He was present in power to bless and heal them. No word like the "I will: be thou clean," which had healed the leper at Capernaum two years before, now fell upon their ears. No hand was raised over them in felt benediction; and yet, minute by minute, the foul disease upon them was disappearing: when, or how, they could not exactly tell; and, at last, they saw—they could not doubt it—they saw that they were healed, but the Healer Himself they did not see. As now in His Church, so then He was out of sight, even when His action was most felt and energetic. His words still lingered in their ears; but it was not impossible, amid the distractions of a new scene, to forget their import; and thus, out of the ten men, nine actually did forget it.

Now, what is this but a sample of what passes in our daily life? Numbers know what it is to have recovered from illness, perhaps very serious illness. God, by His providence, has directed us to use means which might assist—which could not insure—recovery. We have recovered, and now we proceed to account for our recovery. "It was a good constitution," we say, "that carried us through;" or, "It was a skilful change

of treatment just at the crisis of the illness;" or, "It was a change in the weather;" or, "It was a change of air." Now, if this were not intended to be a complete account of the matter—if it was remembered that weather, clime, medical skill, strength of constitution, are all instruments in the hands of a supreme Agent, and that, ever mindful of His agency, we are merely describing the particular instrument which He has selected to carry out His purpose, then no harm would be done; but do we not too often stop short at the secondary or immediate cause of our recovery, and altogether forget the first cause? We see the secondary cause: the first or real cause we do not see, and we are so largely the slaves of sense that the horizon of our view becomes the measure of our gratitude. Alas! brethren, how do we thus turn God's loving generosity against Himself. Unlike those vulgar benefactors who insist upon being recognised while they dispense their bounties, God, generally speaking, hides His hand. He acts through laws which seem to operate spontaneously. He acts through agents who are, at the moment, perfectly free and self-determining. He conceals Himself behind the vast processes of nature, behind the slow movements of history, behind the clouds of heaven, till, at last, we conceive of the world, of the universe, as going on without Him—without Him, its sole Author, its absolute Lord. His generous self-concealment is taken for a forced inactivity, and, of those who still believe Him to have been the Author of all that is not Himself, too many think of Him as men nowadays think of those old builders of schools and colleges, who have left their great foundations to later ages, and are powerless to exert any control over their handiwork. Thus God's very generosity only provokes our thanklessness. He keeps out of sight, and we take it for granted

that He would show Himself if He could,—that His agency is only invisible because it is shadowy or unreal. Oh, singular perversity of our fallen nature, which is thus bound down and enslaved in its captivity to sense that we forget God our Saviour, chiefly because He is too loving to overwhelm us at once with the sense of what we owe to him!

Fifteenth Sunday after Trinity.

Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow.—*St. Matthew* vi. 28.

Sweet nurslings of the vernal skies,
Bathed in soft airs, and fed with dew,
What more than magic in you lies,
To fill the heart's fond view?
In childhood's sports, companions gay,
In sorrow, on Life's downward way,
How soothing! in our last decay
Memorials prompt and true.

Relics ye are of Eden's bowers,
As pure, as fragrant, and as fair,
As when ye crowned the sunshine hours
Of happy wanderers there.
Fallen all beside—the world of life,
How is it stained with fear and strife!
In Reason's world what storms are rife,
What passions range and glare!

But cheerful and unchanged the while
Your first and perfect form ye show,
The same that won Eve's matron smile
In the world's opening glow.

The stars of heaven a course are taught
Too high above our human thought;
Ye may be found if ye are sought,
And as we gaze, we know.

Ye dwell beside our paths and homes,
Our paths of sin, our homes of sorrow,
And guilty man, where'er he roams,
Your innocent mirth may borrow.
The birds of air before us fleet,
They cannot brook our shame to meet—
But we may taste your solace sweet
And come again to-morrow.

Ye fearless in your nests abide—
Nor may we scorn, too proudly wise,
Your silent lessons, undescried
By all but lowly eyes:
For ye could draw the admiring gaze
Of Him who worlds and hearts surveys:
Your order wild, your fragrant maze,
He taught us how to prize.

Ye felt your Maker's smile that hour,
As when He paused and owned you good;
His blessing on earth's primal bower,
Ye felt it all renewed.
What care ye now, if winter's storm
Sweep ruthless o'er each silken form?
Christ's blessing at your heart is warm,
Ye fear no vexing mood.

Alas! of thousand bosoms kind,
That daily court you and caress,
How few the happy secret find
Of your calm loveliness!

"Live for to-day! to-morrow's light
To-morrow's cares shall bring to sight,
Go sleep like closing flowers at night,
And Heaven thy morn will bless."

The Collect.

KEEP, we beseech thee, O Lord, thy Church with thy perpetual mercy: and, because the frailty of man without thee cannot but fall, keep us ever by thy help from all things hurtful, and lead us to all things profitable to our salvation; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

THE RUDDER OF THE SOUL.

The vast differences between man and man in later life depend upon almost unobserved—perhaps imperceptible—acts which encourage or repress spiritual hunger in early years. When we stand where two roads end, we do not see how opposite are the directions in which they respectively lead us; and when, in early life, the character and will have received a warp in the wrong direction,—when religion, instead of exerting an attraction with which no other can compare, falls on a dull ear and a cold heart and a jaded appetite,—when this sphere of sense and time, without satisfying the soul in its better moments, yet does occupy and engross all the powers which should have led to God—thought, affection, imagination, will,—when it seems that nothing—nothing short of that last terrific surprise—will break in upon this dream of senseless satisfaction with the perishable, God often takes the matter into His own hand. In His own way He creates a hunger for Himself. This is the meaning of illness, of loss of friends, of loss of income, of

blighted reputations, of literary failures, and the like, when they come upon us. They are designed by our loving Father to put us out of heart with ourselves. They strip from life its tinsel ornaments: they drive us in upon our own weakness,—upwards towards our God: they provoke in the soul a hunger for something which it knows this world cannot give. And this is the beginning of a new existence. "It is good for me that I have been in trouble, that I may learn thy statutes. The law of Thy mouth is dearer unto me than thousands of gold and silver." Like other tastes, a hunger for spiritual things is, to a great extent, within our power to encourage or repress, although at the first it is a gift of God. Like other tastes, it is strengthened by exercise: it is weakened —it is destroyed—by neglect. Since its object—God—is infinite, it is capable of all but an infinite development; and each sincere prayer, each act of self-sacrifice offered to God, each careful communion, each resolution courageously undertaken and discharged, helps it forward. If desire is the rudder of the soul, and determines its direction, surely, blessed beyond all other tastes and inclinations is this desire which leads us to our God —to the eternal banquet of the just—to the marriage supper of the spotless Lamb. There are many forms of appetite which we can well dispense with: with this, never. There are many banquets from which, with impunity, we may be sent empty away: from this, never. We cannot afford the eternal loss of God. Let us ask Him to give us a simple strong desire to enjoy Him for ever. He will do for us what He has done for thousands before us: He will give us this hunger here and its reward hereafter.

Sixteenth Sunday after Trinity.

I desire that ye faint not at my tribulations for you, which is your glory.—*Ephesians* iii. 13.

WISH not, dear friends, my pain away—
Wish me a wise and thankful heart,
With God, in all my griefs, to stay,
Nor from His loved correction start.

The dearest offering He can crave,
His portion in our souls to prove,
What is it to the gift He gave,
The only Son of His dear love?

But we, like vexed unquiet sprites,
Will still be hovering o'er the tomb
Where buried lie our vain delights,
Nor sweetly take a sinner's doom.

In Life's long sickness evermore
Our thoughts are tossing to and fro:
We change our posture o'er and o'er,
But cannot rest, nor cheat our woe.

Were it not better to lie still,
Let Him strike home and bless the rod,
Never so safe as when our will
Yields undiscerned by all but God?

Thy precious things, whate'er they be
That haunt and vex thee, heart and brain,
Look to the Cross, and thou shalt see
How thou mayst turn them all to gain.

Lovest thou praise? the Cross is shame:
Or ease? the Cross is bitter grief:
More pangs than tongue or heart can frame
Were suffered there without relief.

We of that Altar would partake,
But cannot quit the cost—no throne
Is ours, to leave for Thy dear sake—
We cannot do as Thou hast done.

We cannot part with Heaven for Thee—
Yet guide us in Thy track of love:
Let us gaze on where light should be,
Though not a beam the clouds remove.

So wanderers ever fond and true
Look homeward through the evening sky,
Without a streak of heaven's soft blue
To aid Affection's dreaming eye.

The wanderer seeks his native bower,
And we will look and long for Thee,
And thank Thee for each trying hour,
Wishing, not struggling, to be free.

The Collect.

O LORD, we beseech thee, let thy continual pity cleanse and defend thy Church; and, because it cannot continue in safety without thy succour, preserve it evermore by thy help and goodness; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

THE DISCIPLINE OF SUFFERING.

See here, my brethren, the meaning to many a man in active life of a serious illness. He cannot hope, he

says, ever to make leisure for himself. Business, friends, circumstances take possession of him. He is in a world of incessant occupation from morning till night. If he does not altogether forget the great realities—God, the soul, the cross, death, eternity—he does not think much about them. How should he? He has, as he says, no time that he can call his own. He has no spare energy: his mind is overborne with the claims of life: his habits, too, are formed. He would be unhappy if he did not work up to the high pressure of his previous life. His spirits and his strength keep pace with his habits; or if, for a moment, the demands of work are set aside, it is only that strength and spirits may be recruited in a business-like way, and that he may return to his occupation with renewed energy. Now, to such a man—and there are many such among ourselves—God speaks in mercy through an illness which brings him low even to the very gates of death. "Come, my son, come," he seems to say, "enter thou into thy chamber and shut thy doors about thee. Hide thyself, as it were, for a little moment. Prepare for judgment; for, behold, the Lord cometh out of His place to punish the iniquity of the inhabitant of the earth upon him." The man is stricken with a malady which confines him for weeks or months to the bed of sickness and of pain, and, if all his vital force does not at once give way, his greatest difficulty—those who have suffered much from illness will, I think, bear me out in this,—his greatest difficulty in the earliest stage of illness is not to bear the bodily pain and discomfort which come upon him, but to adopt the new habits of a sick-room, to resign himself to the society of nurses during the long, weary day, to get through the long, sleepless hours at night, and then to begin the monotonous day over again; to hear of the activity and

of the work of those whom he has left behind in the world, and to be himself content to be, as he must be, powerless; to think of the hopes, of the enterprises, of a few days ago, and to know that these must all be abandoned, perhaps for ever. For a man of energy and restlessness this side of illness is very hard indeed to bear. It is one of the reasons why, generally speaking, men are so much less courageous and collected in sickness than women are; and yet it is this enforced detachment from earthly occupations which is the very purpose of the visitation—which is the very certificate of the love, the tender, far-sighted love, of the God who sends it. God has a controversy with that man's soul, and it must be argued out point by point in these hours of weariness, and silence, and unwelcome yet necessary inactivity. God will not allow the man to pass hence ere he has looked well in the face such questions as these: "Why art thou here? Whither art thou going? What is thy soul's chief hope? What is its deepest dread?" "You have suffered long and greatly," said Bishop Bagot of Oxford to a distinguished statesman whom he was visiting on his sick-bed. "Yes," was the answer; "but, knowing what I now know, I would not, for all that this world can give, have been spared one hour or one pang of my illness."

And see, too, in the text, the blessedness of death for those who are prepared to die. What is death for such but retirement from a perishing world into an inner chamber where the spirit holds converse with God? An old writer tells us that he was reminded of the passage in Isaiah (xxvi. 20, 21) when he visited those remarkable sepulchres of the early Christian dead, the catacombs beneath the city of Rome. As he looked on those narrow cells cut out in the soft rock, with a brief inscription

on a tablet in front of each, and read how first one and then another aged man, or youth, or maiden had, in one of the last great imperial persecutions, laid down life itself for Christ, he could not but feel that God had called that soul to enter into the chambers of the blessed dead, and had shut the doors about and hidden it, as it were, for a little moment until the indignation was overpast—until the blessed day of the resurrection, when the Lord Jesus should come out of His place for judgment, when it would enter on its new and on its splendid inheritance of life.

Seventeenth Sunday after Trinity.

Every man of the house of Israel that setteth up his idols in his heart, and putteth the stumbling-block of his iniquity before his face, and cometh to the Prophet; I the Lord will answer him that cometh according to the multitude of his idols.—*Ezekiel* xiv. 4.

STATELY thy walls, and holy are the prayers
Which day and night before thine altars rise;
Not statelier, towering o'er her marble stairs,
Flashed Sion's gilded dome to summer skies,
Not holier, while around him angels bowed,
From Aaron's censer steamed the spicy cloud,

Before the mercy-seat. O Mother dear,
Wilt thou forgive thy son one boding sigh?
Forgive, if round thy towers he walk in fear,
And tell thy jewels o'er with jealous eye?
Mindful of that sad vision, which in thought[1]
From Chebar's plains the captive prophet brought

[1] Ezekiel viii. 3.

To see lost Sion's shame. 'Twas morning prime,
And like a Queen new seated on her throne,
God's crownèd mountain, as in happier time,
Seemed to rejoice in sunshine all her own:
So bright, while all in shade around her lay,
Her northern pinnacles had caught the emerging ray.

The dazzling lines of her majestic roof
Crossed with as free a span the vault of heaven,
As when twelve tribes knelt silently aloof
Ere God His answer to their king had given,[1]
Ere yet upon the new-built altar fell
The glory of the Lord, the Lord of Israel.

All seems the same: but enter in and see
What idol shapes are on the wall portrayed;[2]
And watch their shameless and unholy glee,
Who worship there in Aaron's robes arrayed:
Here Judah's maids the dirge to Thammuz pour,[3]
And mark her chiefs yon orient sun adore.[4]

Yet turn thee, son of man—for worse than these
Thou must behold: thy loathing were but lost
On dead men's crimes, and Jews' idolatries—
Come, learn to tell aright thine own sins' cost,—
And sure their sin as far from equals thine,
As earthly hopes abused are less than hopes divine.

What if within His world, His Church, our Lord
Have entered thee, as in some temple gate,
Where, looking round, each glance might thee afford
Some glorious earnest of thine high estate,
And thou, false heart and frail, hast turned from all
To worship pleasure's shadow on the wall?

[1] 1 Kings viii. 5.
[2] Ezekiel viii. 10.
[3] Ezekiel viii. 14.
[4] Ibid., viii. 16.

If, when the Lord of Glory was in sight,
Thou turn thy back upon that fountain clear,
To bow before the "little drop of light,"
Which dim-eyed men call praise and glory here,
What dost thou, but adore the sun, and scorn
Him at whose only word both sun and stars were born?

If, while around thee gales from Eden breathe,
Thou hid thine eyes, to make thy peevish moan
Over some broken reed of earth beneath,
Some darling of blind fancy dead and gone,
As wisely might'st thou in Jehovah's fane
Offer thy love and tears to Thammuz slain.

Turn thee from these, or dare not to inquire
Of Him whose name is Jealous, lest in wrath
He hear and answer thine unblest desire:
Far better we should cross His lightning's path,
Than be according to our idols heard,
And God should take us at our own vain word.

Thou who hast deigned the Christian's heart to call
Thy Church and shrine; whene'er our rebel will
Would in that chosen home of Thine instal
Belial or Mammon, grant us not the ill
We blindly ask; in very love refuse
Whate'er Thou knowest our weakness would abuse.

Or rather help us, Lord, to choose the good,
To pray for nought, to seek to none, but Thee,
Nor by "our daily bread" mean common food,
Nor say, "From this world's evil set us free;"
Teach us to love, with Christ, our sole true bliss,
Else, though in Christ's own words, we surely pray amiss.

The Collect.

LORD, we pray thee that thy grace may always prevent and follow us, and make us continually to be given to all good works; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

"WHAT SHALL IT PROFIT?"

Does any think and speak of religious truth as of some antiquated theory, grateful perhaps to the recluse divine, but too fragile or too finespun to bear the action of the strong masculine thought of a hard-headed layman in our own busy day? Let such listen to the words of the Redeemer of the world when He asks their attention to the problem of destiny. "What shall it profit?" He condescends with amazing love to the language of man's self-interest; He appeals to the business-like instinct of those whose every energy is devoted to gaining a livelihood or to making a fortune (I had almost said a bold, I trust it may not be an irreverent thing); He seems to address Himself with pointed emphasis to the very temper and instinct of us, the English people. "What shall it profit?" is a question which comes home to a race like ourselves, who are described in unfriendly phrase, yet with substantial accuracy, as "a nation of shopkeepers." My brethren, we need not wince under that description, we may accept the truth, even though we repudiate the *soubriquet*. Honest industry is always respectable; and the man who earns his bread is in reality quite as noble a being as the man who merely inherits it. But surely that which marks us English off among the nations of the earth is the practical temper which is not dazzled by high pretension and lofty sentiment, which is impatient of mere empty show, mere resultless talk, mere useless

activity and bustle, which, while others are enthusiastic, sanguine, venturesome, asks doggedly again and again, "What shall it profit?" Not as the cynic might ask that question—not in scornful indifference to the answer—but with the earnestness of men who wish to ascertain the exact return to be looked for from a proposed action or effort is it generally asked by our countrymen. On no other spot in God's earth is it asked so earnestly and so often as in this very City of London, the home and centre of the commerce of the world. Here, day by day, commerce projects new forms of enterprise; here she incessantly offers new investments for capital, and new opportunities to labour; and not a ship leaves your river, not a railway thrusts itself across, or burrows beneath your thoroughfares, not a company is formed, nor a partnership even distantly hinted at, but a thousand voices ask in chorus, "What shall it profit?" That question is the most familiar idiom, the most universal language, of the busy throngs who live and die immediately around the walls of this cathedral: it represents an interest common to rich and poor, common to wholesale and to retail enterprise; it is asked in private and in public; it is asked by your smallest tradesmen, and by your merchant princes; it is asked in your streets, your committee rooms, and in your wharves and warehouses; it is asked hurriedly and roughly over the humblest counters; it is hinted gently but firmly in the palaces which are the stately creations of your wealth; and as the tide of enterprise rises and falls, and you, the ministers of this vast temple of commerce move, in the mystery of your ceaseless restlessness, from its banks to its exchanges, from its treasures in specie to its treasures on paper, I read one question, one perpetual inquiry traced eloquently and ever upon your keen anxious faces as I walk along

your thoroughfares; aye, though your lips be motionless —you think in public, your very thought is visible; it is always and everywhere, "What shall it profit?" And when from the great arteries of your industrial life I pass to the heart, from which, and around which, all circulates incessantly; when I note how, with an eagerness unrivalled elsewhere, you ask the question, "What shall it profit?" in the corridors of your National Bank, or on the steps of your Royal Exchange, scrutinising as you do with intelligent severity all that can bear ever so remotely upon the answer; I cannot marvel that the statesmen of Europe study your money articles with scarcely less of respect and curiosity than might be due to some scroll of prophecy, since it naturally seems to them that you sit here with your practised hand laid upon the very pulse of history, and with your strained and privileged ear listening for the yet hidden revelations of Providence. Other nations may venture on reckless speculations, or on bold political experiments; other people may rejoice in the ceremonials of government, in the parade and majesty of power, in military display, or in military expeditions; others may go to war for an idea, and send their legions to a distant Syria, or a yet more distant Mexico; but you, as you chronicle their failures, or their victories, exhaust the resources of genuine sympathy, or of refined irony, while you ask again and again, in every variety, under every disguise of language, "What shall it profit?" And while that question is asked thus eagerly and persistently without these walls by the busy multitude of men, it is most solemnly asked within them by One who has reared His throne here for many a century, that He might offer a sanctuary to each wearied soul, and whisper to those who will listen to Him the real secret of their destiny. Jesus Christ also asks. as of old on the hills of Galilee, so

now and here in the heart of London, "What shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?"

Eighteenth Sunday after Trinity.

I will bring you into the wilderness of the people, and there will I plead with you face to face. Like as I pleaded with your fathers in the wilderness of the land of Egypt, so will I plead with you, saith the Lord God.—*Ezekiel* xx. 35, 36.

It is so—ope thine eyes and see—
What viewest thou all around?
A desert, where iniquity
And knowledge both abound.

In the waste howling wilderness
The Church is wandering still,[1]
Because we would not onward press
When close to Sion's hill.

Back to the world we faithless turned,
And far along the wild,
With labour lost and sorrow earned,
Our steps have been beguiled.

Yet full before us, all the while,
The shadowing pillar stays,
The living waters brightly smile,
The eternal turrets blaze.

Yet Heaven is raining angel's bread
To be our daily food,
And fresh, as when it first was shed,
Springs forth the Saviour's blood.

[1] Revelation xii. 14.

From every region, race, and speech,
Believing myriads throng,
Till, far as sin and sorrow reach,
Thy grace is spread along;

Till sweetest nature, brightest art,
Their votive incense bring,
And every voice and every heart
Own Thee their God and King.

All own; but few, alas! will love;
Too like the recreant band
That with Thy patient Spirit strove
Upon the Red-sea strand.

O Father of long-suffering grace,
Thou who hast sworn to stay
Pleading with sinners face to face
Through all their devious way;

How shall we speak to Thee, O Lord,
Or how in silence lie?
Look on us, and we are abhorred;
Turn from us, and we die.

Thy guardian fire, Thy guiding cloud,
Still let them gild our wall,
Nor be our foes and Thine allowed
To see us faint and fall.

Too oft, within this camp of Thine,
Rebellious murmurs rise;
Sin cannot bear to see Thee shine
So awful to her eyes.

Fain would our lawless hearts escape,
And with the heathen be,
To worship every monstrous shape
In fancied darkness free.

Vain thought, that shall not be at all![1]
Refuse we or obey,
Our ears have heard the Almighty's call,
We cannot be as they.

We cannot hope the heathen's doom
To whom God's Son is given,
Whose eyes have seen beyond the tomb,
Who have the key of Heaven.

Weak tremblers on the edge of woe,
Yet shrinking from true bliss,
Our rest must be "no rest below,"
And let our prayer be this:

"Lord, wave again Thy chastening rod,
Till every idol throne
Crumble to dust, and Thou, O God,
Reign in our hearts alone.

"Bring all our wandering fancies home,
For Thou hast every spell,
And 'mid the heathen where they roam,
Thou knowest, Lord, too well.

"Thou know'st our service sad and hard,
Thou know'st us fond and frail;—
Win us to be beloved and spared
When all the world shall fail.

[1] That which cometh into your minds shall not be at all, that ye say, We will be as the heathen, as the families of the countries, to serve wood and stone.—*Ezekiel* xx. 32.

"So when at last our weary days
Are well-nigh wasted here,
And we can trace Thy wondrous ways
In distance calm and clear,

"When in Thy love and Israel's sin
We read our story true,
We may not, all too late, begin
To wish our hopes were new:

"Long loved, long tried, long spared as they,
Unlike in this alone,
That, by Thy grace, our hearts shall stay
For evermore Thine own."

The Collect.

LORD, we beseech thee, grant thy people grace to withstand the temptations of the world, the flesh, and the devil, and with pure hearts and minds to follow thee the only God; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

THE PERSONALITY OF THE DEVIL.

That there is an evil being who is at work in the world—at work around, upon, it may be within us—is what we should naturally infer from what we see and observe. Evil, like good, organises itself, propagates itself, forces its way as if it could bring happiness and blessing to mankind with a consistency and a vigour, on its more limited scale, that rival the working and directing providence of God, and betray the scarcely concealed presence of a practised hand and of an indomitable will. Do not let us refuse to recognise it. Do not let us try to explain it or any other hard fact away. Do not let us afford to our enemy one more proof of his practised genius and adroitness by ceasing, if we can cease,

to be believers in his existence. But also do not let us fear him. For us Christians he has ceased to be formidable. Such is the grace and mercy of our Lord that all these evils which the craft and subtlety of the devil or man worketh against us will be brought to naught, and by the providence of His goodness will be dispersed. Such is Christ's grace, I say, that in answer to prayer it will assuredly please Him to beat down Satan under the feet of the weakest of His servants. When we are tempted to break any one of the known laws of God,—to disown or to contradict any portion of His truth, we know who is near luring us on, if he only can, to our failure and our ruin; but we know also who is nearer still—his ancient Conqueror, our own best and wisest Friend; and one aspiration to Jesus Christ from a believing soul will place His grace and strength at the disposal of His servant. The results of Calvary do not lessen with the lapse of time; and, among these, not the least blessed is the enfeeblement of Satan, and the deliverance of those who, through fear of death, would else be all their lifetime subject to bondage.

Nineteenth Sunday after Trinity.

Then Nebuchadnezzar the king was astonied, and rose up in haste, and spake, and said unto his counsellors, Did not we cast three men bound into the midst of the fire? They answered and said unto the king, True, O king. He answered and said, Lo, I see four men loose, walking in the midst of the fire, and they have no hurt; and the form of the fourth is like the Son of God.—*Daniel* iii. 24, 25.

When persecution's torrent blaze
Wraps the unshrinking martyr's head;
When fade all earthly flowers and bays,
When summer friends are gone and fled,

Is he alone in that dark hour
Who owns the Lord of love and power?

Or waves there not around his brow
A wand no human arm may wield,
Fraught with a spell no angels know,
His steps to guide, his soul to shield?
Thou, Saviour, art his Charmèd Bower,
His Magic Ring, his Rock, his Tower.

And when the wicked ones behold
Thy favourites walking in Thy light,
Just as, in fancied triumph bold,
They deemed them lost in deadly night,
Amazed they cry, "What spell is this,
Which turns their sufferings all to bliss?

"How are they free whom we had bound?
Upright, whom in the gulf we cast?
What wondrous helper have they found
To screen them from the scorching blast?
Three were they—who hath made them four?
And sure a form divine He wore,

"E'en like the Son of God." So cried
The Tyrant, when in one fierce flame
The martyrs lived, the murderers died:
Yet knew he not what angel came
To make the rushing fire-flood seem
Like summer breeze by woodland stream.[1]

He knew not, but there are who know:
The Matron, who alone hath stood,
When not a prop seemed left below,
The first lorn hour of widowhood,

[1] As it had been a moist whistling wind.—*Song of the Three Children*, ver. 27.

Yet cheered and cheering all, the while,
With sad but unaffected smile;—

The Father, who his vigil keeps
By the sad couch whence hope hath flown,
Watching the eye where reason sleeps,
Yet in his heart can mercy own,
Still sweetly yielding to the rod,
Still loving man, still thanking God;—

The Christian pastor, bowed to earth
With thankless toil, and vile esteemed,
Still travailing in second birth
Of souls that will not be redeemed,
Yet steadfast set to do his part,
And fearing most his own vain heart;—

These know: on these look long and well,
Cleansing thy sight by prayer and faith,
And thou shalt know what secret spell
Preserves them in their living death:
Through seven-fold flames thine eye shall see
The Saviour walking with His faithful Three.

The Collect.

O God, forasmuch as without thee we are not able to please thee; Mercifully grant, that thy Holy Spirit may in all things direct and rule our hearts; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

THE LACK OF EARNESTNESS.

As a generation we are not earnest students of Scripture. Few of us have that keen interest in it which was universal in the ancient Church, when its several books could only be procured in manuscript, and with

some considerable difficulty. We have such abundant opportunities of studying it that we might almost seem to despise them; just as those who live in Oxford often neglect to see chapels and libraries which strangers from the antipodes study with the keenest interest; just as the wealthy will often profess themselves weary of the very sight of luxuries which are the envy of the poor. But when at the judgment-seat of Christ we stand face to face with the generations to whom a manuscript of Scripture was a possession infinitely more precious than the masterpiece of a great painter would be to ourselves, and who felt that no amount of time and labour was misspent in the effort to understand it; nay, when we stand face to face with the millions who in this country earn their daily bread by hard toil, and, it may be, sharp suffering, and to many of whom a few fragments of time devoted to the study of the words of Christ appear in the light of a rare and almost priceless luxury, how shall we answer for the use we have made of our vast and varied opportunities? "The Word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him at the last day." How truly, how severely, if so it be that we have not even roused ourselves to ascertain its meaning!

Twentieth Sunday after Trinity.

Hear ye, O mountains, the Lord's controversy, and ye strong foundations of the earth.—*Micah* vi. 2.

WHERE is Thy favoured haunt, eternal Voice,
The region of Thy choice,
Where, undisturbed by sin and earth, the soul
Owns Thy entire control?—

'Tis on the mountain's summit dark and high,
When storms are hurrying by:
'Tis 'mid the strong foundations of the earth,
Where torrents have their birth.

No sounds of worldly toil ascending there,
Mar the full burst of prayer;
Lone Nature feels that she may freely breathe,
And round us and beneath
Are heard her sacred tones: the fitful sweep
Of winds across the steep,
Through withered bents—romantic note and clear
Meet for a hermit's ear,—

The wheeling kite's wild solitary cry,
And, scarcely heard so high,
The dashing waters when the air is still
From many a torrent rill
That winds unseen beneath the shaggy fell,
Tracked by the blue mist well:
Such sounds as make deep silence in the heart
For Thought to do her part.

'Tis then we hear the voice of God within,
Pleading with care and sin:
"Child of my love! how have I wearied thee?
Why wilt thou err from Me?
Have I not brought thee from the house of slaves,
Parted the drowning waves,
And set My saints before thee in the way,
Lest thou shouldst faint or stray?

"What! was the promise made to thee alone?
Art thou the excepted one?
An heir of glory without grief or pain?
O vision false and vain!

There lies thy cross; beneath it meekly bow!
It fits thy stature now:
Who scornful pass it with averted eye,
'Twill crush them by-and-by.

"Raise thy repining eyes, and take true measure
Of thine eternal treasure;
The Father of thy Lord can grudge thee nought,
The world for thee was bought,
And as this landscape broad—earth, sea, and sky—
All centres in thine eye,
So all God does, if rightly understood,
Shall work thy final good."

The Collect.

O ALMIGHTY and most merciful God, of thy bountiful goodness keep us, we beseech thee, from all things that may hurt us; that we, being ready both in body and soul, may cheerfully accomplish those things that thou wouldest have done; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

MAN AND EXTERNAL NATURE.

A traveller in Cornwall when gazing at the masses of granite rock which defy, and look as though they might defy for ever, the continuous onset of the Atlantic, has expressed a thought which comes to most men at some time in their lives. The magnificence and the awe of nature fills him with an impressive sense of the relative insignificance of man. A few years hence and he will be beneath the sod; but those cliffs will stand, as now, facing the ocean, incessantly lashed by its waves, yet unshaken, immovable; and other eyes will gaze upon them for their brief day of life, and then they too will close. Yes, at first sight man is insignificant when thus

confronted with external nature. The purely material world seems to have more in common than we with the unchanging and everlasting years of the Great Creator. Yet we know that it is not so. In reality the rocks are less enduring than man. Each man's personal self will still survive for weal or woe when another catastrophe shall have utterly changed the surface of this planet, and the elements shall have melted with fervent heat, and the earth also and all things that are therein shall have been burnt up. Let us think of that day, warranted by His Word, who has made all that we see. It may be deferred for ages, but it will surely come at last; it will not tarry. Practically speaking, there are for each one of us two supreme realities—God and the soul. The heavens and the earth will pass away. But the soul will still remain, face to face with God; and the Word of the Creator, His Word of Mercy, as well as His Word of Justice, will not pass away.

Twenty-first Sunday after Trinity.

The vision is yet for an appointed time, but at the end it shall speak, and not lie: though it tarry, wait for it; because it will surely come, it will not tarry.—*Habakkuk* ii. 3.

THE morning mist is cleared away,
Yet still the face of heaven is grey,
Nor yet th' autumnal breeze has stirred the grove,
Faded yet full, a paler green
Skirts soberly the tranquil scene,
The red-breast warbles round this leafy cove.

Sweet messenger of "calm decay,"
Saluting sorrow as you may,
As one still bent to find or make the best,

In thee, and in this quiet mead,
The lesson of sweet peace I read,
Rather in all to be resigned than blest.

'Tis a low chant, according well
With the soft solitary knell,
As homeward from some grave beloved we turn,
Or by some holy death-bed dear,
Most welcome to the chastened ear
Of her whom Heaven is teaching how to mourn.

O cheerful, tender strain! the heart
That duly bears with you its part,
Singing so thankful to the dreary blast,
Though gone and spent its joyous prime,
And on the world's autumnal time,
'Mid withered hues and sere, its lot be cast:

That is the heart for thoughtful seer,
Watching, in trance nor dark nor clear,[1]
The appalling future as it nearer draws:
His spirit calmed the storm to meet,
Feeling the rock beneath his feet,
And tracing through the cloud the eternal Cause.

That is the heart for watchman true
Waiting to see what God will do,
As o'er the Church the gathering twilight falls:
No more he strains his wistful eye,
If chance the golden hours be nigh,
By youthful Hope seen beaming round her walls.

Forced from his shadowy paradise,
His thoughts to Heaven the steadier rise:
There seek his answer when the world reproves:

[1] It shall come to pass in that day, that the light shall not be clear, nor dark.—*Zechariah* xiv. 6.

Contented in his darkling round,
If only he be faithful found,
When from the east the eternal morning moves.

Note.—The expression, "calm decay," is borrowed from a friend; by whose kind permission the following stanzas are here inserted.

TO THE RED-BREAST.

Unheard in summer's flaring ray,
Pour forth thy notes, sweet singer,
Wooing the stillness of the autumn day:
Bid it a moment linger,
Nor fly
Too soon from winter's scowling eye.

The blackbird's song at eventide,
And hers, who gay ascends,
Filling the heavens far and wide,
Are sweet. But none so blends,
As thine,
With calm decay, and peace divine.

The Collect.

GRANT, we beseech thee, merciful Lord, to thy faithful people pardon and peace, that they may be cleansed from all their sins, and serve thee with a quiet mind; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

THE WORTH OF FAITH IN A LIFE TO COME.

The expectation of a life after death enables us to see things in their true proportions. The future life furnishes us with a point of view from which to survey the questions, the occupations, the events of this. Until we keep it well before us, we are like those persons

who have never travelled, and have no standard by which to estimate what they see at home. Next to positive error a mistake as to the relative proportions of truth is the greatest misfortune. Yet who does not feel, every day of his existence, how easily this mistake is made? Some occurrence which touches us personally appears to be of world-wide importance. Some book which we have fallen in with, and have read with sympathy, or perhaps have helped to write, seems to mark an epoch in literature or in speculation. Some controversy, with its petty but absorbing ferocities lying far off the main current of tempestuous thought which is sweeping across our distracted generation, appears, through its present relation to ourselves, to touch all interests in earth and heaven. Self magnifies and distorts everything; the true corrective is to be found in the magnificent and tranquillising thought of another life. As men draw near to the threshold of eternity they see things more nearly as they are; they catch perspectives which are not perceived in the days of business and of health. When Bossuet lay a-dying, in great suffering and exhaustion, one who was present thanked him for all his kindness, and using the court language of the day, begged him when in another world to think of the friends whom he was leaving, and who were so devoted to his person and his reputation. At this last word Bossuet, who had almost lost the power of speech, raised himself from the bed, and gathered strength to say, not without an accent of indignation, "Don't talk like that. Ask God to forgive a sinner his sins."

And surely those occupations should claim our first attention which prepare us for that which after all is the really important stage of our existence. All kinds of

earthly duty may indeed be consecrated to this work by a worthy motive; but direct preparation for the future is made in worship. In the most solemn moments which we can spend on earth, we hear the words, "The Body of our Lord Jesus Christ, which was given for thee, preserve thy body and soul unto everlasting life." Nay, all Christian worship is in proportion to its sincerity an anticipation of the life of the world to come. Worship is the earthly act by which we most distinctly recognise our personal immortality: men who think that they will be extinct a few years hence do not pray. In worship we spread out our insignificant life, which yet is the work of the Creator's hands, and the purchase of the Redeemer's Blood, before the Eternal and All-Merciful, that we may learn the manners of a higher sphere, and fit ourselves for companionship with saints and angels, and for the everlasting sight of the Face of God. Worship is the common sense of faith in a life to come; and the hours we devote to it will assuredly be among those upon which we shall reflect with most thankful joy when all things here shall have fallen into a very distant background, and when through the Atoning Mercy our true home has been reached at last.

Twenty-second Sunday after Trinity.

Lord, how oft shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him?— *St. Matthew* xviii. 21.

WHAT liberty so glad and gay,
As where the mountain boy,
Reckless of regions far away,
A prisoner lives in joy?

The dreary sounds of crowded earth,
The cries of camp or town,
Never untuned his lonely mirth,
Nor drew his visions down.

The snow-clad peaks of rosy light
That meet his morning view,
The thwarting cliffs that bound his sight,
They bound his fancy too.

Two ways alone his roving eye
For aye may onward go,
Or in the azure deep on high,
Or darksome mere below.

O blest restraint! more blessèd range
Too soon the happy child
His nook of homely thought will change
For life's seducing wild:

Too soon his altered day-dreams show
This earth a boundless space,
With sun-bright pleasures to and fro
Sporting in joyous race:

While of his narrowing heart each year,
Heaven less and less will fill,
Less keenly, through his grosser ear,
The tones of mercy thrill.

It must be so; else wherefore falls
The Saviour's voice unheard,
While from His pard'ning Cross He calls,
O spare as I have spared?"

By our own niggard rule we try
The hope to suppliants given;
We mete out love, as if our eye
Saw to the end of heaven.

Yes, ransomed sinner! wouldst thou know
How often to forgive,
How dearly to embrace thy foe,
Look where thou hop'st to live;

When thou hast told those isles of light,
And fancied all beyond,
Whatever owns, in depth or height,
Creation's wondrous bond;

Then in their solemn pageant learn
Sweet mercy's praise to see:
Their Lord resigned them all, to earn
The bliss of pardoning thee.

The Collect.

LORD, we beseech thee to keep thy household the Church in continual godliness; that through thy protection it may be free from all adversities, and devoutly given to serve thee in good works, to the glory of thy Name; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

PATIENCE IN DEALING WITH HUMAN CHARACTER.

In no department of life is patience more necessary than in dealing with human character. The young, the slow, the undeveloped, the timid claim it at our hands. No character that is worth anything develops all at once—develops at a single jet; it grows gradually, first from silence and reserve to decision and explicit-

ness, and then to full productiveness and beauty, as our Lord has said, "First the blade, then the ear, then the full corn in the ear." He implies that the slow, measured growth which we see around us in nature is a figure of what we are to expect in human character. In nature we see from time to time the results of growth. The shoot which was just appearing a week ago is to-day an inch long; the bud which was closed yesterday is a flower to-day. We see the results, but we do not see the process; we know that there must have been, that there must be, movement; but it is too measured, too imperceptible for us to detect. It goes forward unremittingly, but its achievements can only be measured at intervals. And so it is with the life of the mind, the soul, the character. We meet a young man just leaving school, still to all intents a boy—high-spirited, cheerful, but without any true sense of what life is; occupied altogether, as it seems to us, with the frivolities that play upon the surface. Ten years, say, pass, and we meet him again before he has lost the freshness of his youth. He is now a thoughtful man; he impresses us by his words and by his silence; by what he says and by what he hints at; by his evident appreciation; by his awful sense of the solemnities amid which he lives,—a sense which, nevertheless, is balanced and unexaggerated, harmonising with the claims of duty, harmonising with the claims of surrounding truths. Whence did he get it all? There has been no great change of circumstances, no tremendous, solemnising sorrow, no catastrophe; yet what a change it is! It has come as the dew falls, it has come as the grass grows, it has come as the winter changes into spring, and spring into summer, — noiselessly, gradually, imperceptibly. There have been, perhaps, natural advantages of character, posi-

tion, surroundings, relatives; there have been obstacles and drawbacks to arrest the course of progress and of growth, and giving it, in part, for awhile some new direction; but the process has gone on nevertheless with the advancing years; for God's transforming grace, too, has been there at work, supplying impulse, vigour, consistency, freshness. And now we see the result, and we reflect that it might have been impaired, might have been ruined, by a lack of patience. There was a time when some few hard, bitter words might have ruined everything; might have led that man to think that nothing mattered, or that everything must necessarily go wrong. And yet how often is patience wanting on the part of older people when dealing with and judging of the young! We expect the work of ten years to be crowded into ten weeks; we expect the growth of character to reveal itself to some mortal microscope of ours, or to the naked eye, when we will; we are like those children who pull up the early primroses once a week to see if they are taking root. Ah! patience is necessary everywhere, and nowhere more than in dealing with human character.

Twenty-third Sunday after Trinity.

Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto His glorious body, according to the working whereby He is able even to subdue all things unto Himself.—*Philippians* iii. 21.

Red o'er the forest peers the setting sun,
The line of yellow light dies fast away
That crowned the eastern copse: and chill and dun
Falls on the moor the brief November day.

Now the tired hunter winds a parting note,
And Echo bids good-night from every glade;
Yet wait awhile, and see the calm leaves float
Each to his rest beneath their parent shade.

How like decaying life they seem to glide!
And yet no second spring have they in store,
But where they fall, forgotten to abide
Is all their portion, and they ask no more.

Soon o'er their heads blithe April airs shall sing,
A thousand wild-flowers round them shall unfold,
The green buds glisten in the dews of Spring,
And all be vernal rapture as of old.

Unconscious they in waste oblivion lie,
In all the world of busy life around
No thought of them; in all the bounteous sky
No drop, for them, of kindly influence found.

Man's portion is to die and rise again—
Yet he complains, while these unmurmuring part
With their sweet lives, as pure from sin and stain
As his when Eden held his virgin heart.

And haply half unblamed his murmuring voice
Might sound in Heaven, were all his second life
Only the first renewed—the heathen's choice,
A round of listless joy and weary strife.

For dreary were this earth, if earth were all,
Though brightened oft by dear Affection's kiss;—
Who for the spangles wears the funeral-pall?
But catch a gleam beyond it, and 'tis bliss.

Heavy and dull this frame of limbs and heart,
Whether slow creeping on cold earth, or borne
On lofty steed, or loftier prow, we dart
O'er wave or field: yet breezes laugh to scorn

Our puny speed, and birds, and clouds in heaven,
And fish, like living shafts that pierce the main,
And stars that shoot through freezing air at even—
Who but would follow, might he break his chain?

And thou shalt break it soon; the grovelling worm
Shall find his wings, and soar as fast and free
As his transfigured Lord with lightning form
And snowy vest—such grace He won for thee,

When from the grave He sprang at dawn of morn,
And led through boundless air thy conquering road,
Leaving a glorious track, where saints, new-born,
Might fearless follow to their blest abode.

But first, by many a stern and fiery blast,
The world's rude furnace must thy blood refine,
And many a gale of keenest woe be passed,
Till every pulse beat true to airs divine,

Till every limb obey the mounting soul,
The mounting soul, the call by Jesus given.
He who the stormy heart can so control,
The laggard body soon will waft to heaven.

The Collect.

O God, our refuge and strength, who art the author of all godliness; Be ready, we beseech thee, to hear the devout prayers of thy Church; and grant that those things which we ask faithfully we may obtain effectually; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

CHRIST IN THE STORM.

To generous minds a time of trouble has its own attractions. It enables a man to hope, with less risk of presumption, that his motives are sincere; it fortifies courage; it suggests self-distrust; it enriches character; it invigorates faith. The storm may rage without, the flood may rise within, but while the Lord of the soul and of the Church is here, though it be "asleep in the hinder part of the ship," all must in the end be well. Things would not have been better for martyrs and confessors, if, in their day, the sea had been calm and the waves unruffled. For them, long since, the winds and waves of life have been stilled, and Christ has brought them to the haven where they would be.

Twenty-fourth Sunday after Trinity.

The heart knoweth his own bitterness; and a stranger doth not intermeddle with his joy.—*Proverbs* xiv. 10.

WHY should we faint and fear to live alone,
Since all alone, so Heaven has willed, we die,[1]
Nor e'en the tenderest heart, and next our own,
Knows half the reasons why we smile and sigh?

Each in his hidden sphere of joy or woe
Our hermit spirits dwell, and range apart;
Our eyes see all around in gloom or glow—
Hues of their own, fresh borrowed from the heart.

And well it is for us our God should feel
Alone our secret throbbings: so our prayer

[1] Je mourrai seul.—*Pascal.*

May readier spring to Heaven, nor spend its zeal
On cloud-born idols of this lower air.

For if one heart in perfect sympathy
Beat with another, answering love for love,
Weak mortals, all entranced, on earth would lie,
Nor listen for those purer strains above.

Or what if Heaven for once its searching light
Lent to some partial eye, disclosing all
The rude bad thoughts that in our bosom's night
Wander at large, nor heed Love's gentle thrall?

Who would not shun the dreary uncouth place?
As if, fond leaning where her infant slept,
A mother's arm a serpent should embrace:
So might we friendless live, and die unwept.

Then keep the softening veil in mercy drawn,
Thou who canst love us, though Thou read us true;
As on the bosom of the aërial lawn
Melts in dim haze each coarse ungentle hue.

So too may soothing Hope Thy leave enjoy
Sweet visions of long-severed hearts to frame:
Though absence may impair, or cares annoy,
Some constant mind may draw us still the same.

We in dark dreams are tossing to and fro,
Pine with regret, or sicken with despair,
The while she bathes us in her own chaste glow,
And with our memory wings her own fond prayer.

O bliss of child-like innocence, and love
Tried to old age! creative power to win,
And raise new worlds, where happy fancies rove,
Forgetting quite this grosser world of sin.

Bright are their dreams, because their thoughts are clear,
Their memory cheering: but the earth-stained sprite,
Whose wakeful musings are of guilt and fear,
Must hover nearer earth, and less in light.

Farewell, for her, the ideal scenes so fair—
Yet not farewell her hope, since Thou hast deigned,
Creator of all hearts! to own and share
The woe of what Thou mad'st, and we have stained.

Thou knowest our bitterness—our joys are Thine[1]—
No stranger Thou to all our wanderings wild:
Nor could we bear to think, how every line
Of us, Thy darkened likeness and defiled,

Stands in full sunshine of Thy piercing eye,
But that Thou call'st us brethren: sweet repose
Is in that word—the Lord who dwells on high
Knows all, yet loves us better than He knows.

The Collect.

O LORD, we beseech thee, absolve thy people from their offences; that through thy bountiful goodness we may all be delivered from the bands of those sins, which by our frailty we have committed: Grant this, O heavenly Father, for Jesus Christ's sake, our blessed Lord and Saviour. *Amen.*

ALONE.

If there be any truth which Christianity has brought out into marvellous clearness before the human soul, it is this, that each soul really lives in awful solitude beneath the eye of God; that in the soul within us we possess a principle of imperishable life, which, moreover,

[1] Thou hast known my soul in adversities.—*Ps.* xxxi. 7.

is capable of infinite bliss and of unspeakable agony. Now the world endeavours in its literature, in its modes of language and thought, to lower this master-truth by suggesting to us, what indeed is true, but what does not include that other truth, that we are members of a family, of a town, of a nation. It would fain make us forget that we live and that we shall die—alone.

Twenty-fifth Sunday after Trinity.

The hoary head is a crown of glory, if it be found in the way of righteousness.—*Proverbs* xvi. 31.

THE bright-haired morn is glowing
O'er emerald meadows gay,
With many a clear gem strowing
The early shepherd's way.
Ye gentle elves, by Fancy seen
Stealing away with night
To slumber in your leafy screen,
Tread more than airy light.

And see what joyous greeting
The sun through heaven has shed;
Though fast yon shower be fleeting,
His beams have faster sped.
For lo! above the western haze
High towers the rainbow arch
In solid span of purest rays:
How stately is its march!

Pride of the dewy morning!
The swain's experienced eye
From thee takes timely warning,
Nor trusts the gorgeous sky.

For well he knows, such dawnings gay
Bring noons of storm and shower,
And travellers linger on the way
Beside the sheltering bower.

E'en so, in hope and trembling,
Should watchful shepherd view
His little lambs assembling,
With glance both kind and true;
'Tis not the eye of keenest blaze,
Nor the quick swelling breast,
That soonest thrills at touch of praise—
These do not please him best.

But voices low and gentle,
And timid glances shy,
That seem for aid parental
To sue all wistfully,
Still pressing, longing to be right,
Yet fearing to be wrong,—
In these the Pastor dares delight,
A lamb-like, Christ-like throng.

These in Life's distant even
Shall shine serenely bright,
As in the autumnal heaven
Mild rainbow tints at night,
When the last shower is stealing down,
And ere they sink to rest,
The sunbeams weave a parting crown
For some sweet woodland nest.

The promise of the morrow
Is glorious on that eve,
Dear as the holy sorrow
When good men cease to live.

When brightening ere it die away
Mounts up their altar flame,
Still tending with intenser ray
To Heaven whence first it came.

Say not it dies, that glory,
'Tis caught unquenched on high;
Those saintlike brows so hoary
Shall wear it in the sky.
No smile is like the smile of death,
When all good musings past
Rise wafted with the parting breath,
The sweetest thought the last.

The Collect.

STIR up, we beseech thee, O Lord, the wills of thy faithful people; that they, plenteously bringing forth the fruit of good works, may of thee be plenteously rewarded; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

SPIRITUAL IMPROVEMENT.

What is the most earnest aspiration of every Christian soul in its best moments? Is it not spiritual improvement? And why is it that the main source of this, the study of the Bible, is so often unproductive? Because men only study the surface of the Bible, or at best the mind of the Bible. They do not study its heart. Doubtless the Bible, more than any other book, is a centre of interest; philological, historical, philosophical, moral. The man of letters was right who said that if he must have the companionship of only one book to the end of his days, he would choose the Bible. But to see in Holy Scripture the most interesting history, the strongest and

most pathetic poetry, the most searching moral teaching known among men, is to do less than justice to the true majesty and power of the sacred volume. We learn all these things from the Bible as its critics; but there is something beyond to be learned from it only when we have the grace to be simply learners, anxious that it should speak to our inmost souls. And its power of doing this is best realised when the great moral barrier of self-complacency has been removed, and the soul hungers to be filled with the good things of spiritual truth. Here it is that we often see the illuminative office of sorrow; sorrow forces us on our knees; sorrow disperses our prejudices; sorrow casts down our mental idols; sorrow sharpens our appetite for the unseen and the eternal. There are psalms, there are passages in the Gospels and in St. Paul, which no man can understand without the preparatory discipline of mental pain; and thousands of Christians have learned to say, with the Psalmist, "It is good for me that I have been in trouble, that I may learn Thy statutes."

Sunday next before Advent.

Gather up the fragments that remain, that nothing be lost.
—*St. John* vi. 12.

WILL God indeed with fragments bear,
Snatched late from the decaying year?
Or can the Saviour's blood endear
The dregs of a polluted life?
When down the o'erwhelming current tossed,
Just ere he sink for ever lost,
The sailor's untried arms are crossed
In agonising prayer, will Ocean cease her strife?

Sighs that exhaust but not relieve,
Heartrending sighs, O spare to heave
A bosom freshly taught to grieve
For lavished hours and love misspent!
Now through her round of holy thought
The Church our annual steps has brought,
But we no holy fire have caught;
Back on the gaudy world our wilful eyes were bent.

Too soon the ennobling carols, poured
To hymn the birth-night of the Lord,
Which duteous Memory should have stored
For thankful echoing all the year—
Too soon those airs have passed away;
Nor long within the heart would stay
The silence of Christ's dying day,
Profaned by worldly mirth, or scared by worldly fear.

Some strain of hope and victory
On Easter wings might lift us high;
A little while we sought the sky:
And when the Spirit's beacon-fires
On every hill began to blaze,
Lightening the world with glad amaze,
Who but must kindle while they gaze?
But faster than she soars, our earth-bound fancy tires.

Nor yet for these, nor all the rites,
By which our Mother's voice invites
Our God to bless our home delights,
And sweeten every secret tear:—
The funeral dirge, the marriage vow,
The hallowed font where parents bow,
And now elate and trembling now
To the Redeemer's feet their new-found treasures bear:—

Not for the Pastor's gracious arm
Stretched out to bless—a Christian charm
To dull the shafts of worldly harm :—
Nor, sweetest, holiest, best of all,
For the dear feast of Jesus dying,
Upon that altar ever lying,
Where souls with sacred hunger sighing
Are called to sit and eat, while angels prostrate fall :—

No, not for each and all of these,
Have our frail spirits found their ease.
The gale that stirs the autumnal trees
Seems tuned as truly to our hearts
As when, twelve weary months ago,
'Twas moaning bleak, so high and low,
You would have thought Remorse and Woe
Had taught the innocent air their sadly thrilling parts.

Is it, Christ's light is too divine,
We dare not hope like Him to shine?
But see, around His dazzling shrine
Earth's gems the fire of Heaven have caught;
Martyrs and saints—each glorious day
Dawning in order on our way—
Remind us, how our darksome clay
May keep the ethereal warmth our new Creator brought.

These we have scorned, O false and frail!
And now once more the appalling tale,
How love divine may woo and fail,
Of our lost year in Heaven is told—
What if as far our life were past,
Our weeks all numbered to the last,
With time and hope behind us cast,
And all our work to do with palsied hands and cold?

O watch and pray ere Advent dawn !
For thinner than the subtlest lawn
'Twixt thee and death the veil is drawn.
But Love too late can never glow :
The scattered fragments Love can glean,
Refine the dregs, and yield us clean
To regions where one thought serene
Breathes sweeter than whole years of sacrifice below.

*** *The Collect is the same as for the previous day.*

LOST OPPORTUNITIES.

As the years pass, we listen in life to the sound of the closing doors as, one after another, they strike upon the ear of the soul and of the conscience. We hear them proclaiming that a something which once was ours, and for the use of which we still have to answer, is ours no longer. We hear them more often, we hear them louder as the time flies past ; and thus in their frequency and their urgency they lead us up towards a climax when there will be the closing of a door and none beyond it—the door of our individual probation at death, the door of all probations at the last judgment. Place the last judgment in the light of that aspect of life on which we have been dwelling, and it is seen in its essential character and principle to be not an innovating catastrophe so much as the result to which the lesser catastrophes of life steadily point onward. It is the final term of many experiences which lead up to it. As by a continuous analogy it exhibits visibly, and on a scale of unimagined vastness, that judgment of God which is ever going forward visibly, and, with individuals, bringing to a close first one and then another sphere and department of our responsibility, until the account is suffi-

ciently made up to be closed in whatever sense, until the time has come when all accounts can be closed, and the last hour for the world of moral beings of their probation has clearly sounded in the providence of God.

The life of man may be looked at in many ways. It is, no doubt, the life of a highly organised animal, it is the life of a being with social instincts; it is the life of a mind which, under the disguise and protection of an odd physical form, can yet think and reason and claim its share in an intellectual world. But it is much more than all of this. It is, before all things, the life of an imperishable spirit, here and now in the stage of its probation. All other aspects of human life are of small account indeed compared with this; for this discovers at once man's greatness and his peril; it stamps his present existence with a paradoxical union of significance and import. This life is insignificant, because it is the briefest preface to the volumes of the eternity that must follow after it; it is of infinite importance, because it will determine, and that beyond recall, their unchanging character. The time of probation? Yes, that is the true, the adequate description of human life. All other accounts of it are utterly subordinate to this. Why have we these bodily frames with their various functions? Why are we spirits with these several endowments of mind and affection and self-determining will? Why is your life or mine cast in such and such circumstances, with such advantages, or without them; with or without friends or education, or health or property, or high intellect, as the case may be? Why, but because He who made each one of us wills that, in the particular circumstances which are His own appointment, the spirit which He had made and which He sees through and through in its inmost essence of thought and purpose, should

freely choose Himself as its end and portion, and should in that choice be utterly and for ever blessed. In the acceptance or rejection of this destiny lies the profound, the awful meaning of probation. God tests us by all that we are, by all that surrounds us, each in his individual inalienable life; He will discover whether we will choose Himself or something else, and less than He, and whether, having so chosen, we will adhere to the choice; and as life passes, the time during which this momentous issue is decided, it passes also, and at last it is closed, "and the door is shut."

St. Andrew's Day.

He first findeth his own brother Simon, and saith unto him, We have found the Messias. . . . And he brought him to Jesus.—*St. John* i. 41, 42.

When brothers part for manhood's race,
What gift may most endearing prove
To keep fond memory in her place,
And certify a brother's love?

'Tis true, bright hours together told,
And blissful dreams in secret shared,
Serene or solemn, gay or bold,
Shall last in fancy unimpaired.

E'en round the death-bed of the good
Such dear remembrances will hover,
And haunt us with no vexing mood
When all the cares of earth are over.

But yet our craving spirits feel
We shall live on, though Fancy die,

And seek a surer pledge—a seal
Of love to last eternally.

Who art thou, that wouldst grave thy name
Thus deeply in a brother's heart?
Look on this saint, and learn to frame
Thy love-charm with true Christian art.

First seek thy Saviour out, and dwell
Beneath the shadow of His roof,
Till thou have scanned His features well,
And known Him for the Christ by proof;

Such proof as they are sure to find
Who spend with Him their happy days,
Clean hands, and a self-ruling mind
Ever in tune for love and praise.

Then, potent with the spell of Heaven,
Go, and thine erring brother gain,
Entice him home to be forgiven,
Till he, too, see his Saviour plain.

Or, if before thee in the race,
Urge him with thine advancing tread,
Till, like twin stars, with even space,
Each lucid course be duly sped.

No fading frail memorial give
To soothe his soul when thou art gone,
But wreaths of hope for aye to live,
And thoughts of good together done.

That so, before the judgment-seat,
Though changed and glorified each face,
Not unremembered ye may meet
For endless ages to embrace.

The Collect.

ALMIGHTY GOD, who didst give such grace unto thy holy Apostle Saint Andrew, that he readily obeyed the calling of thy Son Jesus Christ, and followed him without delay; Grant unto us all, that we, being called by thy holy Word, may forthwith give up ourselves obediently to fulfil thy holy commandments; through the same Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

THE IMPORTANCE OF FRIENDSHIP.

The importance of friendships as exercising a decisive influence upon a man's character and life was, perhaps, as well understood in the ancient world, to say the least, as now. The ancients made friendships and kept them up in a more formal and regulated way than we do; and, like Cicero and others, they wrote elaborate treatises upon the subject, and reduced it, as far as they could, to a matter of method and rule. Perhaps before the idea of a universal brotherhood in Christ had dawned upon the conscience of the world, a single sincere attachment between two human beings had a significance which we to-day can with difficulty appreciate. But, at any rate, the ancients were right in estimating very highly the moral importance of friendship; for a friend—and there is scarcely a truth which a young man ought more carefully to lay to heart—a friend at once reflects and moulds character. His influence penetrates in a thousand ways into the recesses of thought and of feeling. He leaves his mark there, most assuredly. He is a help or a hindrance, he is a blessing or a curse, as the case may be. In choosing a friend, therefore, or, to speak more truly, with a view to what is generally the fact, in allowing oneself to glide into a friendship, it is most important to ask ourselves what it is precisely

that attracts us in the proposed friend. Is it a good income, a great position, a splendid home? These are not the man who is to be our friend. They are the accidents of his life; they are not its essence. Is it a fertile imagination, a vigorous reason, a sparkling wit? These, alas! are compatible (who does not know it?) with the worst degradations of the man himself. What is his real character? What are the qualities of his heart? What, properly speaking, are his spiritual endowments? What is his amount of faith in the unseen,—of hope in an eternal future,—of love of God and of man? These are the questions which should be answered concerning these spiritual gifts. In a matter of such vital import do not let us willingly be ignorant.

St. Thomas' Day.

Thomas, because thou hast seen Me, thou hast believed: blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed.—*St. John* xx. 29.

We were not by when Jesus came,[1]
But round us, far and near,
We see His trophies, and His name
In choral echoes hear.
In a fair ground our lot is cast,
As in the solemn week that past,
While some might doubt, but all adored,[2]
Ere the whole widowed Church had seen her risen Lord.

[1] Thomas, one of the twelve, called Didymus, was not with them when Jesus came.—*St. John* xx. 24.

[2] When they saw Him, they worshipped Him: but some doubted.—*St. Matthew* xxviii. 17.

Slowly, as then, His bounteous hand
The golden chain unwinds,
Drawing to Heaven with gentlest band
Wise hearts and loving minds.
Love sought Him first—at dawn of morn [1]
From her sad couch she sprang forlorn;
She sought to weep with Thee alone,
And saw Thine open grave, and knew that Thou wert gone.

Reason and Faith at once set out [2]
To search the Saviour's tomb;
Faith faster runs, but waits without,
As fearing to presume,
Till Reason enter in, and trace
Christ's relics round the holy place—
"Here lay His limbs, and here His sacred head,
And who was by, to make His new-forsaken bed?"

Both wonder, one believes—but while
They muse on all at home,
No thought can tender Love beguile
From Jesus' grave to roam.
Weeping she stays till He appear—
Her witness first the Church must hear—
All joy to souls that can rejoice
With her at earliest call of His dear gracious voice.

Joy too to those, who love to talk
In secret how He died,
Though with sealed eyes awhile they walk,
Nor see Him at their side;

[1] St. Mary Magdalene's visit to the sepulchre.
[2] St. Peter and St John.

Most like the faithful pair are they,
Who once to Emmaus took their way,
Half darkling, till their Master shed
His glory on their souls, made known in breaking bread.

Thus, ever brighter and more bright,
On those He came to save
The Lord of new-created light
Dawned gradual from the grave;
Till passed the inquiring daylight hour,
And with closed door in silent bower
The Church in anxious musing sate
As one who for redemption still had long to wait.

Then, gliding through the unopening door,
Smooth without step or sound,
"Peace to your souls," He said—no more—
They own Him, kneeling round.
Eye, ear, and hand, and loving heart,
Body and soul in every part,
Successive made His witnesses that hour,
Cease not in all the world to show His saving power.

Is there on earth a spirit frail,
Who fears to take their word,
Scarce daring, through the twilight pale,
To think he sees the Lord?
With eyes too tremblingly awake
To bear with dimness for His sake?
Read and confess the Hand Divine
That drew thy likeness here so true in every line.

For all thy rankling doubts so sore,
Love thou thy Saviour still,
Him for thy Lord and God adore,
And ever do His will.

Though vexing thoughts may seem to last,
Let not thy soul be quite o'ercast;—
Soon will He show thee all His wounds, and say,
Long have I known thy name[1]—know thou My face alway.

The Collect.

ALMIGHTY and everliving God, who for the more confirmation of the faith didst suffer thy holy Apostle Thomas to be doubtful in thy Son's resurrection; Grant us so perfectly, and without all doubt, to believe in thy Son Jesus Christ, that our faith in thy sight may never be reproved. Hear us, O Lord, through the same Jesus Christ, to whom, with thee and the Holy Ghost, be all honour and glory, now and for evermore. *Amen.*

AN AGE OF DOUBT.

We live, it is needless to say, in what is to a large extent an age of doubt. In private intercourse, in general society, in clubs and in workshops, among men of letters and among artisans, truths are freely called in question which were received unhesitatingly by our fathers, and for which they would have shed their blood. Certainly doubt is not the only characteristic of our age; side by side with doubt there is faith,—strong, penetrating, intelligent, definite,—and in its growth and strength lies the best hope of the future. The current does not flow all one way; and yet the widespread existence of doubt in many who have been brought up as Christians, is unhappily notorious.

Nay, what is more serious, this spread of doubt in religious truth is looked upon in some quarters as a

[1] In Exodus xxxiii. 17, God says to Moses, "I know thee by name;" meaning, "I bear special favour towards thee." Thus our Saviour speaks to St. Thomas by name in the place here referred to.

positive advantage. Doubt, it is said, is the parent of inquiry; it is the foe of mental stagnation; it explodes superstitions; it means movement, energy, progress. This may be true as regards many subjects of human interest, our information respecting which involves a mixture of truth and error; in these doubt has its province and function; it is a stimulating, purifying, corrective influence. But every sensible man would agree that to doubt necessary truth, such as the axioms of mathematics, could lead to no mental advantage whatever; and for Christians who believe that God has spoken, the Christian Revelation is necessary truth. No man who holds this Revelation to be true can regard doubt about it as other than one of the greatest of possible misfortunes; to take any other view of such doubt is to be already committed to its principle. When the poet says that "There lives more faith in honest doubt, believe me, than in half the creeds," he must be contrasting those who are hesitating to profess a creed which they have never held with those who have held it as a profession without knowing its power. Otherwise, his words are a false paradox; it is false to say that the man who doubts the truth of religion is better off in any way than the man who accepts it with his whole mind and heart.

Let us distinguish here between two different things that are often confounded, namely, doubt as a habit of mind, and inquiry. Inquiry into religious questions is often, and for many Christians, not merely legitimate, but a serious duty; we cannot obey the apostolic precept of being "ready to give a reason of the hope that is in us" without inquiry, often anxious and perplexing, into the grounds of that hope. But doubt as a state of mind; doubt as a permanent attitude of the soul towards religious truth, is, I make bold to say, a calamity of the

first order, if only because it is fatal ultimately to moral vigour. There are some here who know that I am not describing any imaginary case. It is in a man's best moments, it is when he is making his best efforts that the haunting spirit of doubt deals its most fatal blows. You would turn for half an hour from the pettinesses, the vexations, the degradations of life, to the pages of the New Testament, to hold communion with Him whom we meet in the Gospels: and forthwith the spirit of doubt suggests some apparent discrepancy between this narrative and that, and presently whispers, "May it not all be a beautiful legend?" Or you remember some promise, such as "I will never leave thee nor forsake thee," and you bethink yourself of prayer; the living God, you say, is here to help you. But as you begin to pour out your heart, the spirit of doubt suggests that perhaps He to whom you are speaking is after all only a creation of human thought whom our highest science has banished from its conception of the universe. Or, recollecting the happiness of a good communion in years gone by, you again present yourself at the altar, and for awhile it seems as if the old associations which gather round those moments, so tender and so awful, might victoriously assert themselves within your soul; when, lo! the spirit of doubt breathes into your ear, with a dreadful cynicism, the deadly questions, "Is there any real blessing here? What is the good of this antiquated rite?" And forthwith Heaven's sunshine disappears from your soul, and all again is darkness. Now it is a matter of common sense that doubt cannot utterly destroy the value of the Gospels, of prayer, of Holy Communion, without moral loss. Ay, it shatters the very springs of moral effort; it makes barren and unfruitful those rare moments of life in which moral energy should find its refreshment and recover its force. Why

need I insist on a truism which will find an echo in too many a weary heart? To talk of doubt as an advantage is the language either of ignorance or of insincerity; doubt is, above all things, in a majority of cases, moral paralysis; it is the loss of the motives which make life happy by making it useful.

Our Lord's prescription for dealing with doubt may be summed up in the rule: "Make the most of such truth as you still recognise, and the rest will follow." Thomas did not doubt the report of his senses; let him see what it was that his senses reported. They told him that the crucified Christ was before him, and alive; but that was a fact which meant a great deal beyond itself. At any rate, let Thomas be sure that whatever else was doubtful there was no doubt about the Resurrection: let him recognise that one truth and make the most of it. A rule like this might be expected to work well, because it would counteract the particular habit of mind which fosters the state of doubt. Doubt flourishes in, nay, it is, a mental atmosphere of vagueness. Nothing is quite denied or quite accepted; everything is thought possible, everything uncertain: men lazily suppose that there is as much to be said against any one truth as for it, and no one to strike the balance between conflicting evidence.

Now if any one truth, however limited and elementary, can be really held as true, it will so far arrest the sway of this habit of universal doubt. And there are very few men who do not hold something for true, even though theirs should be a very stinted creed. If they reject the grace of the Sacraments, they believe in the Atonement; if they deny our Lord's Divinity, they are, as the phrase goes, Christian Theists; if they cannot believe in the Christian Revelation, they have no doubt that there does exist a moral and personal God; if, unhappily, they have

misgivings as to this great and awful truth, yet they recognise in themselves the law of right and wrong—recognise it not the less clearly because they cannot be sure what is right and what is wrong. Very well; if they have lost their hold on all besides, let them make the most of this one remaining fragment of truth,—the indelible distinction between right and wrong. Look hard at that distinction, my doubting friend; it is for you what the pierced hands and riven side of Christ were for St. Thomas; it bids you thrust your finger into it and grasp it, and convince yourself that whatever else is uncertain and unsubstantial, it at least is real. Look hard at it; handle it well; make the most of it; and so far as it is concerned, you are not a doubter; here is something solid before which you bow. Look hard at it, grasp it, and it will lead you on to truths beyond itself. For this law of right and wrong, whence comes it? If it be a law, and not merely a fortuitous result of social prejudices, it implies a Lawgiver, and a moral Lawgiver too. And when faith in a moral God has been recovered, we have a second and an infinitely grander truth, limiting the province and operation of doubt, and inviting the doubter to weigh its immensity and power, that it may lead him on to other certainties which, in their turn, depend on it.

. . . . . .

The fact is, no one truth is isolated altogether from other truths; there is an interconnection between truth and truth, which lies in the nature of things, and the sway and guidance of which cannot be resisted by an honest mind; so that when any one truth is grasped as being absolutely true, the soul is in a fair way to recover healthiness of tone, and to put an end to the reign of vagueness and doubt. No sooner was St. Thomas sure

that he saw before him the Body of the Risen Jesus, than he confessed, not merely the truth of the Resurrection, but the infinitely higher and vaster truth of Christ's Divinity, which the Resurrection attested: "Thomas answered and said unto Him, My Lord and my God."

Let none, then, who doubt, despair. A clear hold on one single truth may save faith in all. One single truth, the last it may be in the order of surrender, clung to as for life, may be the starting-point of faith's resurrection in the soul. Cling to that truth, as you would live in the true sense of life; cling to it, though there be, to your apprehension, nothing else to which to cling; thrust hand and finger into its very wounds, that you may at least be certain of its reality; and be assured that this faithful tenacity will yet stand you in good stead; that the dawn of a brighter day is not far off, when He to whom you cling in clinging to anything that is true, shall bring you forth to the perfect light, and your eyes shall behold His righteousness.

The Conversion of St. Paul.

And he fell to the earth, and heard a voice saying unto him, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou Me? And he said, Who art Thou, Lord? And the Lord said, I am Jesus whom thou persecutest.—*Acts* ix. 4, 5.

THE mid-day sun, with fiercest glare,
Broods o'er the hazy, twinkling air;
Along the level sand
The palm-tree's shade unwavering lies,
Just as thy towers, Damascus, rise
To greet yon wearied band.

The leader of that martial crew
Seems bent some mighty deed to do,
So steadily he speeds,
With lips firm closed and fixèd eye,
Like warrior when the fight is nigh,
Nor talk nor landscape heeds.

What sudden blaze is round him poured,
As though all Heaven's refulgent hoard
In one rich glory shone?
One moment—and to earth he falls:
What voice his inmost heart appals?—
Voice heard by him alone.

For to the rest both words and form
Seem lost in lightning and in storm,
While Saul, in wakeful trance,
Sees deep within that dazzling field
His persecuted Lord revealed
With keen yet pitying glance:

And hears the meek upbraiding call
As gently on his spirit fall,
As if th' Almighty Son
Were prisoner yet in this dark earth,
Nor had proclaimed His royal birth,
Nor His great power begun.

"Ah! wherefore persecut'st thou Me?"
He heard and saw, and sought to free
His strained eye from the sight:
But Heaven's high magic bound it there,
Still gazing, though untaught to bear
The insufferable light.

"Who art Thou, Lord?" he falters forth:—
So shall sin ask of heaven and earth
At the last awful day.
"When did we see Thee suffering nigh,[1]
And passed Thee with unheeding eye?
Great God of judgment, say!"

Ah! little dream our listless eyes
What glorious presence they despise,
While, in our noon of life,
To power or fame we rudely press.—
Christ is at hand, to scorn or bless,
Christ suffers in our strife.

And though heaven's gates long since have closed,
And our dear Lord in bliss reposed
High above mortal ken,
To every ear in every land
(Though meek ears only understand)
He speaks as He did then.

"Ah! wherefore persecute ye Me?
'Tis hard, ye so in love should be
With your own endless woe.
Know, though at God's right hand I live,
I feel each wound ye reckless give
To the least saint below.

"I in your care My brethren left,
Not willing ye should be bereft
Of waiting on your Lord.
The meanest offering ye can make—
A drop of water—for love's sake,[2]
In Heaven, be sure, is stored."

[1] St. Matthew xxv. 44. [2] St. Matthew x. 42.

O by those gentle tones and dear,
When Thou hast stayed our wild career,
  Thou only hope of souls,
Ne'er let us cast one look behind,
But in the thought of Jesus find
  What every thought controls.

As to Thy last Apostle's heart
Thy lightning glance did then impart
  Zeal's never-dying fire,
So teach us on Thy shrine to lay
Our hearts, and let them day by day
  Intenser blaze and higher.

And as each mild and winning note
(Like pulses that round harp-strings float
  When the full strain is o'er)
Left lingering on his inward ear
Music, that taught, as death drew near,
  Love's lesson more and more:

So, as we walk our earthly round,
Still may the echo of that sound
  Be in our memory stored:
"Christians! behold your happy state:
Christ is in these, who round you wait;
  Make much of your dear Lord!"

The Collect.

O God, who, through the preaching of the blessed Apostle St. Paul, hast caused the light of the Gospel to shine throughout the world; Grant, we beseech thee, that we, having his wonderful conversion in remembrance, may shew forth our

thankfulness unto thee for the same, by following the holy doctrine which he taught; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

THE IMPERIOUS CLAIMS OF RELIGION.

Religion must indeed always command the attention of practical men, because it is, at least, one of the most powerful forces, because it shapes the strongest passions that can govern the conduct of large masses of mankind. It also will ever be interesting to serious thinkers, whether they accept its authority or not; for without controversy it has a word to say upon the highest objects of human thought. But for those who look at it, not only from without but from within, not as a toy of the intellect, but as a necessity of the soul, it must be something more than all this. If there be any truth in its teachings at all, if its aspirations be anything more than a waste of heart and effort, lavished through centuries upon what are after all only weird or graceful phantoms of the brain, then nothing that can occupy our thoughts can really compare with it in point of absorbing and momentous import. Beyond everything else, it must have imperious claims upon the time and thought and working power of every human being who has ever felt in any serious degree the unspeakable solemnity of life and death. May God endow us with a sense of this interest in that which binds us to Himself, or may He deepen it; and then in answer to the longings which it will assuredly foster in every sincere soul, may He bless us, and show us the light of His countenance, and be merciful unto us.

The Purification.

Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God.—*St. Matthew* v. 8.

BLESSED are the pure in heart,
For they shall see our God;
The secret of the Lord is theirs,
Their soul is Christ's abode.

Might mortal thought presume
To guess an angel's lay,
Such are the notes that echo through
The courts of Heaven to-day.

Such the triumphal hymns
On Sion's Prince that wait,
In high procession passing on
Towards His temple-gate.

Give ear, ye kings—bow down,
Ye rulers of the earth—
This, this is He; your Priest by grace,
Your God and King by birth.

No pomp of earthly guards
Attends with sword and spear,
And all-defying, dauntless look,
Their monarch's way to clear;

Yet are there more with Him
Than all that are with you—
The armies of the highest Heaven,
All righteous, good, and true.

Spotless their robes and pure,
Dipped in the sea of light,

That hides the unapproachèd shrine
From men's and angels' sight.

His throne, thy bosom blest,
O Mother undefiled—
That throne, if aught beneath the skies,
Beseems the sinless child.

Lost in high thoughts, "whose son
The wondrous Babe might prove,"
Her guileless husband walks beside,
Bearing the hallowed dove:

Meet emblem of His vow,
Who on this happy day
His dove-like soul—best sacrifice—
Did on God's altar lay.

But who is he, by years
Bowed, but erect in heart,
Whose prayers are struggling with his tears?
"Lord, let me now depart.

"Now hath thy servant seen
Thy saving health, O Lord;
'Tis time that I depart in peace,
According to Thy word."

Yet swells the pomp: one more
Comes forth to bless her God:
Full fourscore years, meek widow, she
Her heavenward way hath trod.

She who to earthly joys
So long had given farewell,
Now sees, unlooked for, Heaven on earth,
Christ in His Israel.

Wide open from that hour
The temple-gates are set,
And still the saints rejoicing there
The holy Child have met.

Now count His train to-day,
And who may meet Him, learn:
Him child-like sires, meek maidens find,
Where pride can nought discern.

Still to the lowly soul
He doth Himself impart,
And for His cradle and His throne
Chooseth the pure in heart.

The Collect.

ALMIGHTY and everliving God, we humbly beseech thy Majesty, that, as thy only-begotten Son was this day presented in the temple in substance of our flesh, so we may be presented unto thee with pure and clean hearts, by the same thy Son Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

RULES FOR OUR DAILY LIFE.

Observe what may be the religious use of all law—all rule—to the human soul. It should teach man to know from experience something of his weakness, and so should lead him to throw himself upon a higher power for pardon and for strength. The moral law written, indistinctly, on the hearts of the heathen did this great service for the Gentile world. It made the thoughtful heathen look upwards for traces of the invisible Lawgiver. It rendered him dissatisfied with his own efforts to achieve that which he knew to be certainly right. It led him to yearn, however vaguely, for pardon and for strength, to

be received at the hands of an unseen friend. The rules which we Christians make for our daily lives may help us in the same sort of way. No prudent Christian will live without some rule of life—a rule about prayer, about self-examination, about communions, about personal expenditure, about intercourse with others, about the employment of time, about the study of Scripture, about the management of the temper and the thoughts and the feelings and the resolves of the will. And such a rule is meant, no doubt, to be kept; and in the Church of Jesus Christ, with the aid of His supernatural grace, it can be kept. Every Christian may say with St. Paul, "I can do all things through Christ that strengtheneth me." But, practically, for the great majority of us, such a rule acts just as the old Jewish law did for the Jews. It is a tutor to bring us afresh, again and again, with a new sense of guilt and of dependence and of weakness, to the feet of our gracious Master. That rule was made, perhaps—it was accepted—in some moment of penitence of fervour, and that moment has passed. Since then we have gone through a time of darkness—of depressed moral effort—of enfeebled resolutions—of shattered hopes, if through nothing worse. And so, with our broken rule of life in our hands, we turn to Him in whose strength we had hoped to keep it. "Lord," we cry, "lift Thou up the light of Thy countenance upon us.

> 'Nothing in my hands I bring,
> Simply to Thy cross I cling;
> Could my tears for ever flow,
> Could my zeal no respite know,
> All for sin could not atone,
> Thou must save, and Thou alone.'"

Our rule of life itself, just like the Jewish moral law of old, has done us this good service: it has brought us, as a private tutor, down to the school and to the cross of Christ.

St. Matthias' Day.

Wherefore of these men which have companied with us all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us, beginning from the baptism of John unto that same day that He was taken up from us, must one be ordained to be a witness with us of His resurrection.—*Acts* i. 21, 22.

WHO is God's chosen priest?
He who on Christ stands waiting day and night,
Who traced His holy steps, nor ever ceased,
From Jordan banks to Bethphage height:

Who hath learned lowliness
From his Lord's cradle, patience from His Cross;
Whom poor men's eyes and hearts consent to bless;
To whom, for Christ, the world is loss;

Who both in agony
Hath seen Him and in glory; and in both
Owned Him divine, and yielded, nothing loth,
Body and soul, to live and die,

In witness of his Lord,
In humble following of his Saviour dear:
This is the man to wield the unearthly sword,
Warring unharmed with sin and fear.

But who can e'er suffice—
What mortal—for this more than angels' task,
Winning or losing souls, Thy life-blood's price?
The gift were too divine to ask,

But Thou hast made it sure
By Thy dear promise to Thy Church and Bride,
That Thou, on earth, wouldst aye with her endure,
Till earth to Heaven be purified.

Thou art her only Spouse,
Whose arm supports her, on whose faithful breast
Her persecuted head she meekly bows,
Sure pledge of her eternal rest.

Thou, her unerring guide,
Stayest her fainting steps along the wild;
Thy mark is on the bowers of lust and pride
That she may pass them undefiled.

Who then, uncalled by Thee,
Dare touch Thy spouse, Thy very self below?
Or who dare count him summoned worthily,
Except Thine hand and seal he show?

Where can Thy seal be found,
But on the chosen seed, from age to age
By Thine anointed heralds duly crowned,
As kings and priests Thy war to wage?

Then fearless walk we forth,
Yet full of trembling, Messengers of God:
Our warrant sure, but doubting of our worth,
By our own shame alike and glory awed.

Dread Searcher of the hearts,
Thou who didst seal by Thy descending Dove
Thy servants' choice, O help us in our parts,
Else helpless found, to learn and teach Thy love.

The Collect.

O Almighty God, who into the place of the traitor Judas didst choose thy faithful servant Matthias to be of the number of the twelve Apostles; Grant that thy Church, being alway

preserved from false Apostles, may be ordered and guided by faithful and true pastors; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

THE AGE WE LIVE IN.

It is easy to exaggerate the importance of the age we live in; it is a subtle inclination of self-love which leads us to do so. Yet after allowing for this propensity or weakness we can scarcely doubt that the present is a period of exceptional importance, whether to the State or to Religion, both in England and Europe. Scarcely a year passes without a crash of some old throne or constitution; and around us are taking place, silently but with astonishing rapidity, vast political and social changes which cannot but lead to much besides in the years immediately to come. To be entering on the full powers of life in such days as these may be a privilege or a misery; as a man has or has not the heart to feel their moral solemnity. Alas for those whose conduct at such a time exposes noble names and ancient institutions to a condemnation which will make it at least difficult to link the past with the future! Alas for those who can see clearly and far into that which is hidden from most of us, yet who enjoy their keen-sightedness, if not with a reckless levity, yet without feeling any generous desire to lend a hand towards making an ark of safety for truth and goodness! For on a great scale or a small, there will be, there is, some share in the work of Noah to be taken by all of us; and they who work most in silence and unobserved, may have at the last the largest share in the blessing of the great Patriarch.

And, leaving public interests and duties, there is one sense in which each one of us must build his ark, and

that quickly. To every man death is the Deluge, and life is the time given him wherein to prepare to meet it. If we would not sink beneath the waters we must build our ark; and we have much less than the one hundred and twenty years of Noah in which to build it. What if this brief and precious period is passing from us while we stand aside, watching the efforts of others, either in moody indifference, or in scornful contempt! What if —as St. Augustine said of some Christians in his day, whose natural energy furthered Christ's kingdom, while their hearts were not enlisted in His cause—our part is only that of the mercenary Cainites, whose services the Patriarch enlisted to build the ark, into which, when the day of trouble came, they would not enter! Let us look into this matter, if it be for the first time. Let us lose no more days in setting to work, and let us take heed how we set to work. The ark of salvation, says St. Augustine again, must be built by the Christian out of the wood of Christ's cross. We cannot ourselves furnish either the design or the material; but if God will not save us by ourselves, He certainly will not save us without ourselves, without our corresponding, that is to say, with His purposes of grace and mercy. Yet if He is with us it matters little, although the clouds are sensibly darker than they were, and the fountains of the great deep are already breaking up. It matters little, though all be submerged before our eyes beneath the rising tide, if we know and are sure, upon the strength of His word, that after a brief voyage upon the waters, our feet will rest upon the Eternal Mountain, and we shall have our part in that mighty thanksgiving which will never end.

The Annunciation of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

And the angel came in unto her, and said, Hail, thou that art highly favoured, the Lord is with thee: blessed art thou among women.—*St. Luke* i. 28.

Oh! Thou who deign'st to sympathise
With all our frail and fleshly ties,
Maker, yet Brother dear,
Forgive the too presumptuous thought,
If, calming wayward grief, I sought
To gaze on Thee too near.

Yet sure 'twas not presumption, Lord,
'Twas Thine own comfortable word
That made the lesson known:
Of all the dearest bonds we prove,
Thou countest sons' and mothers' love
Most sacred, most Thine own.

When wandering here a little span,
Thou took'st on Thee to rescue man,
Thou hadst no earthly sire:
That wedded love we prize so dear,
As if our heaven and home were here,
It lit in Thee no fire.

On no sweet sister's faithful breast
Wouldst Thou Thine aching forehead rest,
On no kind brother lean;
But who, O perfect filial heart,
E'er did like Thee a true Son's part,
Endearing, firm, serene?

Thou wept'st, meek maiden, mother mild,
Thou wept'st upon thy sinless Child,
Thy very heart was riven:
And yet, what mourning matron here
Would deem thy sorrows bought too dear
By all on this side Heaven?

A Son that never did amiss,
That never shamed His Mother's kiss,
Nor crossed her fondest prayer:
E'en from the tree He deigned to bow
For her His agonisèd brow,
Her, His sole earthly care.

Ave Maria! blessèd Maid!
Lily of Eden's fragrant shade,
Who can express the love
That nurtured thee so pure and sweet,
Making thy heart a shelter meet
For Jesus' holy Dove?

Ave Maria! Mother blest,
To whom, caressing and caressed,
Clings the Eternal Child;
Favoured beyond archangels' dream,
When first on thee with tenderest gleam
Thy new-born Saviour smiled:—

Ave Maria! thou whose name
All but adoring love may claim,
Yet may we reach thy shrine;
For He, thy Son and Saviour, vows
To crown all lowly lofty brows
With love and joy like thine.

Blessed is the womb that bare Him—blessed [1]
The bosom where His lips were pressed,
But rather blessed are they
Who hear His word and keep it well,
The living homes where Christ shall dwell,
And never pass away.

The Collect.

We beseech thee, O Lord, pour thy grace into our hearts; that, as we have known the incarnation of thy Son Jesus Christ by the message of an angel, so by his cross and passion we may be brought unto the glory of his resurrection; through the same Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

FAMILY TRADITION—THE FAMILY BIBLE.

Just as the truest nobility of soul is a thing altogether independent of social position,—just as the finest and the loftiest characters are to be detected, not seldom but frequently, beneath roughness of speech, and hard hands, and fustian jackets, so the family, the home and school of the purest and the choicest virtues, is no monopoly of the great. It exists, perhaps, on the whole in a purer, because in a less artificial form, in the cottage of the working man, just as it did at Nazareth. And every family has its traditions of the past—has its encouragements and its warnings, its splendid memories of devotion and virtue, and too often its skeletons in the cupboard. And all this is part of the providential teaching intended for each member of the family. When a boy is told that so many generations ago one of his ancestors did something noble or generous,—when he is told that, but for the misconduct of such and such a

[1] St. Luke xi. 27, 28.

member of his race, his family would be in a very different position from that which it now occupies,—when he is bidden imitate this or that excellence in his father, or avoid such and such a defect which is recorded, it may be, of his great uncle, he is brought in this way under the play of a series of very powerful motives which are part of the predestined discipline, depend upon it, to which God subjects him, and a very powerful part too. He is taught to trace God's doings in the time of old, amongst those human beings who have handed on to him his name, his character, his physiognomy, his very flesh and blood; to see that amidst the humblest and the commonest tissues of domestic circumstances—births, marriages, failures, successes, illnesses, deaths—the same divine hand was present which shapes the destiny of empires and rules the sun and the stars. There is an institution, as I may venture to call it, more common, I fear, in the last generation than in our own,—more common certainly in country districts than it is in large cities, —more common, too, alas! in humble life than in the households of the great: I mean the Family Bible. Surely it is a beautiful and precious custom to keep in every household one splendid copy of the divine book, throned reverentially upon a shelf apart when it is not being reverentially used,—throned there as the choicest treasure of the family; and then to inscribe in its first vacant pages each step of God's awful and loving providence within that dwelling—each birth, each marriage, each death —bringing these things thus out of the world of common incident into the courts of the temple, and laying up a store of reflection and instruction for the generations to come. As we bend over such a Bible as that—a precious heirloom, it may be, of those who used it, and who are now, we trust, with Christ—crowded with names

which suggest nothing to others, but which are full of varied and precious memories to us their descendants, how natural is it to exclaim out of the fulness of the heart, "O God, we have heard with our ears, and our fathers have told us, what Thou hast done in the time of old."

St. Mark's Day.

And the contention was so sharp between them, that they departed asunder one from the other.—*Acts* xv. 39.

Compare 2 *Timothy* iv. 11.—Take Mark, and bring him with thee: for he is profitable to me for the ministry.

OH! who shall dare in this frail scene
On holiest happiest thoughts to lean,
On Friendship, Kindred, or on Love?
Since not Apostles' hands can clasp
Each other in so firm a grasp,
But they shall change and variance prove.

Yet deem not on such parting sad
Shall dawn no welcome dear and glad:
Divided in their earthly race,
Together at the glorious goal,
Each leading many a rescued soul,
The faithful champions shall embrace.

For e'en as those mysterious Four,
Who the bright whirling wheels upbore
By Chebar in the fiery blast,[1]
So, on their tasks of love and praise
The saints of God their several ways
Right onward speed, yet join at last.

[1] They turned not when they went; they went every one straight forward.—*Ezekiel* i. 9.

And sometimes e'en beneath the moon
The Saviour gives a gracious boon,
When reconcilèd Christians meet,
And face to face, and heart to heart,
High thoughts of holy love impart
In silence meek, or converse sweet.

Companion of the Saints! 'twas thine
To taste that drop of peace divine,
When the great soldier of thy Lord
Called thee to take his last farewell,
Teaching the Church with joy to tell
The story of your love restored.

O then the glory and the bliss,
When all that pained or seemed amiss
Shalt melt with earth and sin away!
When saints beneath their Saviour's eye,
Filled with each other's company,
Shall spend in love the eternal day!

The Collect.

O ALMIGHTY GOD, who hast instructed thy holy Church with the heavenly doctrine of thy Evangelist Saint Mark; Give us grace, that being not like children carried away with every blast of vain doctrine, we may be established in the truth of thy holy Gospel; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO ST. MARK.

Eighteen centuries have passed since St. Mark went to reign somewhere beneath his Master's throne, whose life he had described; but he has left us the result of his choicest gift—he has left us his Gospel. What has

it—what have the three other Gospels—hitherto done for each of us? It is recorded that John Butler, an excellent Church of England layman of the last generation, stated on his death-bed that, on looking back on his life, the one thing which he most regretted was that he had not given more time to the careful study of the life of our Lord in the Four Evangelists. Probably he has not been alone in that regret; and, if the truth were told, many of us would have to confess that we spend much more thought and time upon the daily papers, which describe the follies and errors of the world, than on the records of that life which was given for the world's redemption. The festival of an evangelist ought to suggest a practical resolution that, so far as we are concerned, the grace which he received, according to the measure of the gift of Christ, shall not, please God, be lost. Ten minutes a day seriously spent on our knees, with the Gospel in our hands, will do more to quicken faith, love, reverence, spiritual and moral insight and power, than we can easily think. "For the words of the Lord are pure words, even as the silver which, from the earth, is tried and purified seven times in the fire. More to be desired are they than gold, yea, than much fine gold: sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb. Moreover, by them is thy servant taught; and in keeping of them there is great reward."

THE SOCIAL BOND OF CHRISTIANITY.

By the terms of his nature man is a social being; his social instincts are originally due not to what he has made himself, but to his manhood. In its three forms —the family, the country, the race—society takes possession of us. We are born into a family; long before

we can determine and shape our course, other human beings are acting upon us with decisive power, and our affections are drawn out towards and engaged by them beyond recall. Then, as our horizon extends, we associate ourselves with society in the larger form of our country; its frontier, its enthusiasms, its apprehensions, its dangers, its aspirations become, in a sense, our own; a whole world of passion and interest, which had slept unsuspected in the depths of our being, is roused into activity, and we find ourselves capable of much whereof we never dreamt. But the human soul knows no limits to its higher aspirations, and the social instinct, in all noble-minded men, endeavours to be as wide in its range of exercise as the human race. To be a man, as heathens have felt, is to have sympathy with everything that is truly human.

When, then, our Lord Jesus Christ came to do the best that Divine Wisdom could do for us, He made provision for the social instinct in man. He knew what was in us, and He ordered accordingly. The new life which He brought us is not only a personal bond between each of us and our Maker, it is also a social bond between each of us and our brethren who share it. Thus Christianity becomes concrete and actual, not merely in the believing Christian, but in the organised and universal Church. A Christian is not only a man who is of a particular moral type and temper, or who knows and can say how man can come to be as he should be before God; he is also a man who knows and remembers that he is a member of a divinely-constituted society of men. For if any one thing is written plainly in the New Testament, it is that our Lord came to found a society; that He called this society by no less a name than that of the kingdom of heaven, in order to remind men of its true

object and character; and that in well-ordered membership of this society, no less than in sincere personal faith and love towards the Author and Restorer of our being, does the true Christian life essentially consist.

St. Philip and St. James.

Let the brother of low degree rejoice in that he is exalted: but the rich, in that he is made low.—*St. James* i. 9, 10.

DEAR is the morning gale of spring,
And dear the autumnal eve;
But few delights can summer bring
A Poet's crown to weave.

Her bowers are mute, her fountains dry,
And ever Fancy's wing
Speeds from beneath her cloudless sky
To autumn or to spring.

Sweet is the infant's waking smile,
And sweet the old man's rest—
But middle age by no fond wile,
No soothing calm, is blest.

Still in the world's hot restless gleam
She plies her weary task,
While vainly for some pleasant dream
Her wandering glances ask.—

O shame upon thee, listless heart,
So sad a sigh to heave,
As if thy Saviour had no part
In thoughts, that make thee grieve.

As if along His lonesome way
He had not borne for thee
Sad languors through the summer day,
Storms on the wintry sea.

Youth's lightning-flash of joy secure
Passed seldom o'er His spright,—
A well of serious thought and pure,
Too deep for earthly light.

No spring was His—no fairy gleam—
For He by trial knew
How cold and bare what mortals dream,
To worlds where all is true.

Then grudge not thou the anguish keen
Which makes thee like thy LORD,
And learn to quit with eye serene
Thy youth's ideal hoard.

Thy treasured hopes and raptures high—
Unmurmuring let them go,
Nor grieve the bliss should quickly fly
Which CHRIST disdained to know.

Thou shalt have joy in sadness soon;
The pure, calm hope be thine,
Which brightens, like the eastern moon,
As day's wild lights decline.

Thus souls, by nature pitched too high,
By sufferings plunged too low,
Meet in the Church's middle sky,
Half-way 'twixt joy and woe,

To practise there the soothing lay
That sorrow best relieves:
Thankful for all God takes away,
Humbled by all He gives.

The Collect.

O ALMIGHTY GOD, whom truly to know is everlasting life; grant us perfectly to know thy Son Jesus Christ to be the way, the truth, and the life; that, following the steps of thy holy Apostles, Saint Philip and Saint James, we may stedfastly walk in the way that leadeth to eternal life; through the same thy Son Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

COME AND SEE.

"Come and see." From St. Philip's day until now this invitation has been addressed to mankind by the Church of Christ. It is her first step in meeting our difficulties; it is a condition of the cure she would administer to moral as well as to mental pain. Christianity is not to be really understood when looked at only in the intellectual landscape, as if it were but one out of the many elements which make up the thought and the life of the human race. Kind distance may lend enchantment to a picturesque falsehood, it can be no gain to truth. If the gospel had really issued from some mystic or scholastic Nazareth, and could, in the last analysis, be accounted for as a natural product of the mind and heart of man, St. Philip's invitation would be an imprudence in the mouth of its preachers. As it is, the Church of Christ pleads ever with humanity, "Give yourself a chance." Come and see. Do not only talk about the kingdom and the power of the Son of God, understand that He is alive; acquaint yourselves with Him. Ask that you may see Him not merely with the

eye of the natural intelligence, but with the eye of the illuminated spirit. Do not waste life in framing theories of the beautiful, but come, as did Nathanael, into the presence of Christ. Mark the story of His earthly life in the Gospels, and reflect that what He was then He is now. Speak to Him in prayer as to an all-powerful Friend Who hears, and Who as He sees best will answer. Touch the garment of His humanity in sacraments, that upon you too, as upon one of old, virtue may come out of Him. Open your conscience to the purifying and consoling influences of His Spirit, open your hearts to the constraining generosities of His Dying Love. . . . The real difficulty with thousands in the present day is not that Christianity has been found wanting, but that it has never been seriously tried. They have been interested in it, but have remained at a distance from it. They have passed their best years in supposing that Christ's religion is a problem to be ceaselessly argued about, when lo! it is a life to be spent at the feet of a Living Master, and it justifies itself only and completely when it is lived.

St. Barnabas.

The son of consolation, a Levite.—*Acts* iv. 36.

THE world's a room of sickness, where each heart
Knows its own anguish and unrest;
The truest wisdom there, and noblest art,
Is his, who skills of comfort best;
Whom by the softest step and gentlest tone
Enfeebled spirits own,
And love to raise the languid eye,
When, like an angel's wing, they feel him fleeting by:—

Feel only—for in silence gently gliding
Fain would he shun both ear and sight,
'Twixt Prayer and watchful Love his heart dividing,
A nursing father day and night.
Such were the tender arms, where cradled lay,
In her sweet natal day,
The Church of Jesus; such the love
He to His chosen taught for His dear widowed Dove.

Warmed underneath the Comforter's safe wing,
They spread the endearing warmth around:
Mourners, speed here your broken hearts to bring,
Here healing dews and balms abound:
Here are soft hands that cannot bless in vain,
By trial taught your pain:
Here loving hearts, that daily know
The heavenly consolations they on you bestow.

Sweet thoughts are theirs, that breathe serenest calms,
Of holy offerings timely paid,[1]
Of fire from Heaven to bless their votive alms
And passions on God's altar laid.
The world to them is closed, and now they shine
With rays of love divine,
Through darkest nooks of this dull earth
Pouring, in showery times, their glow of "quiet mirth."

New hearts before their Saviour's feet to lay,
This is their first, their dearest joy:
Their next, from heart to heart to clear the way[2]
For mutual love without alloy;

[1] Having land, sold it, and brought the money, and laid it at the apostles' feet.—*Acts* iv. 37.

[2] Barnabas took him, and brought him (Saul) to the apostles.—*Acts* ix. 27.

Never so blest, as when in Jesus' roll
They write some hero-soul,
More pleased upon his brightening road
To wait, than if their own with all his radiance glowed.

O happy spirits, marked by God and man
Their messages of love to bear,[1]
What though long since in Heaven your brows began
The genial amarant wreath to wear,
And in the eternal leisure of calm
Ye banquet there above,
Yet in your sympathetic heart
We and our earthly griefs may ask and hope a part.

Comfort's true sons! amid the thoughts of down
That strew your pillow of repose,
Sure, 'tis one joy to muse, how ye unknown
By sweet remembrance soothe our woes,
And how the spark ye lit, of heavenly cheer,
Lives in our embers here,
Where'er the Cross is borne with smiles,
Or lightened secretly by Love's endearing wiles:

Where'er one Levite in the temple keeps
The watch-fire of his midnight prayer,
Or issuing thence, the eyes of mourners steeps
In heavenly balm, fresh gathered there;
Thus saints, that seem to die in earth's rude strife,
Only win double life;
They have but left our weary ways
To live in memory here, in heaven by love and praise.

The Collect.

O Lord God Almighty, who didst endue thy holy Apostle Barnabas with singular gifts of the Holy Ghost; Leave us not,

[1] Acts xi. 22; xiii. 2.

we beseech thee, destitute of thy manifold gifts, nor yet of grace to use them always to thy honour and glory; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

GRACE.

When religious truth is learnt to any purpose, it is learnt not merely as a problem which is grasped by the understanding, but as a rule of thought and life which is freely accepted by the will, and especially as a tender devotion towards an unseen Person that can possess, and govern, and absorb the heart. These things are separable in treatises on religious psychology; they are inseparable in the practical experience of the living Christian, to whom his creed is a serious reality. They carry us, if we are to account for them in their entirety, far beyond the range of any human energy or forethought. We are here on the traces of the work of the inward Teacher, whose task was already heralded by prophecy; who was to write the will of God upon the hearts of men; who was to supplement, and at times to supersede, natural methods of inquiry by an inward illumination. We are here close to a phenomenon, higher, more complex, more beautiful, in every way more worthy of attention, than any which we find within the frontiers of the natural universe. We are already thinking of Divine Grace. Apart from Grace, the religious life of Christendom is a thick tangle of unintelligible mysticism; in view of it, antecedents and effects are scarcely less clearly traceable than in the heavens above us, or in the beautiful clothing of the earth beneath our feet, or in the machinery and functions of our bodies. Or, to be more exact, Grace may remind us of the action of such mysterious forces in nature as is electricity, which, although ever under the governance of law, is at one while so independent of us

as to threaten us from the clouds with ruin and death, and at another so wholly within our power that, like a public messenger or a household servant, it does our bidding with docile precision.

But if there be one thing more than another characteristic of Grace, it is that we have nothing to do with winning it. We may co-operate with it; we may forfeit it if we neglect it; we may or may not have predispositions for receiving it. But in itself it is, as its name implies, a free gift; it is given by Him who might withhold it. We cannot either claim it as a right, or possess ourselves of it surreptitiously, or galvanise our natural faculties into doing its work so as to diminish our sense of obligation towards the Giver. In its wider and its narrower sense, Grace is His gift. The whole economy of Redemption, the Incarnation of the Divine Son, His perfect teaching, His sinless example, His expiatory death, His rising from the grave, His ascension on high, His perpetual pleading in that world beyond the stars,—whence is all this but from the free, undeserved bounty of the Infinite Mercy thus lavished upon us, the children of the Fall? And Grace in the specific sense of the action of the Holy Spirit, by whom the whole Church is governed and sanctified; by whom the individual heart is filled with light and love; and whose work especially it is—sometimes freely, sometimes through channels accurately defined and known, such as are the sacraments —to knit our frail and perishing nature to the Divine Humanity of the Saviour;—what is Grace, in this narrower and more accustomed sense, but a free gift from first to last? Assuredly, if there be aught good in us, Grace has made us what we are; and without it our life is as nothing, or worse than nothing, before the sanctity and the justice of God.

St. John Baptist's Day.

Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord: and he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers. —*Malachi* iv. 5, 6.

TWICE in her season of decay
The fallen Church hath felt Elijah's eye
Dart from the wild its piercing ray:
Not keener burns, in the chill morning sky.
The herald star
Whose torch afar
Shadows and boding night-birds fly.

Methinks we need him once again,
That favoured seer—but where shall he be found?
By Cherith's side we seek in vain,
In vain on Carmel's green and lonely mound:
Angels no more
From Sinai soar,
On his celestial errands bound.

But wafted to her glorious place,
By harmless fire, among the ethereal thrones,
His spirit with a dear embrace
Thee the loved harbinger of Jesus owns,
Well pleased to view
Her likeness true,
And trace, in thine, her own deep tones.

Deathless himself, he joys with thee
To commune how a faithful martyr dies,
And in the blest could envy be,
He would behold thy wounds with envious eyes,

Star of our morn,
Who yet unborn,[1]
Didst guide our hope, where Christ should rise.

Now resting from your jealous care
For sinners, such as Eden cannot know,
Ye pour for us your mingled prayer,
No anxious fear to damp Affection's glow,
Love draws a cloud
From you to shroud
Rebellion's mystery here below.

And since we see, and not afar,
The twilight of the great and dreadful day,
Why linger, till Elijah's car
Stoop from the clouds? Why sleep ye? rise and pray,
Ye heralds sealed
In camp or field
Your Saviour's banner to display,

Where is the lore the Baptist taught,
The soul unswerving and the fearless tongue?
The much-enduring wisdom, sought
By lonely prayer the haunted rocks among?
Who counts it gain[2]
His light should wane,
So the whole world to Jesus throng?

Thou Spirit, who the Church didst lend
Her eagle wings, to shelter in the wild,[3]
We pray Thee, ere the Judge descend,
With flames like these, all bright and undefiled,

[1] The Babe leaped in my womb for joy.—*St. Luke* i. 44.
[2] He must increase, but I must decrease.—*St. John* iii. 30.
[3] Revelation xii. 14.

Her watch-fires light,
To guide aright
Our weary souls, by earth beguiled.

So glorious let Thy Pastors shine,
That by their speaking lives the world may learn
First filial duty, then divine,[1]
That sons to parents, all to Thee may turn;
And ready prove
In fires of love,
At sight of Thee, for aye to burn.

The Collect.

ALMIGHTY GOD, by whose providence thy servant John Baptist was wonderfully born, and sent to prepare the way of thy Son our Saviour, by preaching of repentance; Make us so to follow his doctrine and holy life, that we may truly repent according to his preaching; and after his example constantly speak the truth, boldly rebuke vice, and patiently suffer for the truth's sake; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

WHAT ARE WE EACH OF US MEANT TO DO?

Each of us has some intended niche to occupy, some one particular work to do, just as surely as it was the work of our Divine Redeemer, and of Him alone, to achieve the salvation of the world.

It may be a task of many years. It may be a single action, a single witness to truth, a single act of duty, done in one particular day, at one hour—nay, in the

[1] He shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers.—*Malachi* iv. 6.

To turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just; to make ready a people prepared for the Lord. —*St. Luke* i. 17.

compass of a few minutes, yet carrying in it all the moral power of a lifetime—and exhausting, by being done, the reasons for which, in the Eternal Mind, life was given to the agent. A martyr may compress into a few minutes of agony all the moral and spiritual work on which a philanthropist expends his time during his fourscore years. A mother may, by bringing up a child in the fear of God, do as much in the eyes of our common Master as a great teacher or statesman. The question is, What are we each of us *meant* to do? And this question can only be answered by a survey of our capacities and our circumstances, which do practically interpret the will of God to each of us.

St. Peter's Day.

When Herod would have brought him forth, the same night Peter was sleeping.—*Acts* xii. 6.

THOU thrice denied, yet thrice beloved,[1]
Watch by Thine own forgiven friend;
In sharpest perils faithful proved,
Let his soul love Thee to the end.

The prayer is heard—else why so deep
His slumber on the eve of death?
And wherefore smiles he in his sleep
As one who drew celestial breath?

He loves and is beloved again—
Can his soul choose but be at rest?
Sorrow hath fled away, and Pain
Dares not invade the guarded nest.

[1] St. John xxi. 15–17.

He dearly loves, and not alone:
For his winged thoughts are soaring high
Where never yet frail heart was known
To breathe in vain Affection's sigh.

He loves and weeps—but more than tears
Have sealed Thy welcome and his love—
One look lives in him, and endears
Crosses and wrongs where'er he rove:

That gracious chiding look,[1] Thy call
To win him to thyself and Thee,
Sweetening the sorrow of his fall,
Which else were rued too bitterly.

E'en through the veil of sleep it shines,
The memory of that kindly glance;—
The Angel watching by, divines
And spares awhile his blissful trance.

Or haply to his native lake
His vision wafts him back, to talk
With Jesus, ere His flight He take,
As in that solemn evening walk,

When to the bosom of His friend,
The Shepherd, He whose name is Good,
Did His dear lambs and sheep commend,
Both bought and nourished with His blood:

Then laid on him the inverted tree,
Which, firm embraced with heart and arm,
Might cast o'er hope and memory,
O'er life and death, its awful charm.

[1] St. Luke xxii. 61.

With brightening heart he bears it on,
His passport through the eternal gates,
To his sweet home—so nearly won
He seems, as by the door he waits,

The unexpressive notes to hear
Of angel song and angel motion,
Rising and falling on the ear
Like waves in Joy's unbounded ocean.—

His dream is changed—the Tyrant's voice
Calls to that last of glorious deeds—
But as he rises to rejoice,
Not Herod but an Angel leads.

He dreams he sees a lamp flash bright
Glancing around his prison room—
But 'tis a gleam of heavenly light
That fills up all the ample gloom.

The flame, that in a few short years
Deep through the chambers of the dead
Shall pierce, and dry the fount of tears,
Is waving o'er his dungeon-bed.

Touched he upstarts—his chains unbind—
Through darksome vault, up massy stair,
His dizzy, doubting footsteps wind
To freedom and cool moonlight air.

Then all himself, all joy and calm,
Though for awhile his hand forego,
Just as it touched the martyr's palm,
He turns him to his task below;

The pastoral staff, the keys of Heaven,
To wield awhile in grey-haired might,
Then from his cross to spring forgiven,
And follow Jesus out of sight.

The Collect.

O Almighty God, who by thy Son Jesus Christ didst give to thy Apostle Saint Peter many excellent gifts, and commandedst him earnestly to feed thy flock; Make, we beseech thee, all Bishops and Pastors diligently to preach thy holy Word, and the people obediently to follow the same, that they may receive the crown of everlasting glory; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

THE ATTAINMENT OF PERSEVERANCE.

Perseverance is likely to be secured by three things especially. First, by a sense of constant dependence upon God, since, as a matter of fact, we cannot subsist spiritually, or in any other way, except with His aid. It is well to bear this constantly in mind. To be self-confident is of itself to be in danger, since God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace to the humble; to be constantly mindful that the life of the soul depends on God; that His right hand upholds the soul, if it is upheld at all, this is to be on the right road to perseverance. And next, by prayer and perseverance, we have to remember that prayer and perseverance is a distinct grace, just like faith, or hope, or charity; it must, therefore, be sought and won by prayer, just as these other graces, and perhaps by very importunate prayer. It is a good rule to set apart one day in the week for prayer for particular objects, and Saturday, if I may make the suggestion, is a very good day for prayer and perseverance. Do not be discouraged if, so far as

you can see, your prayer does not seem to be answered all at once. God may be testing your integrity of purpose. Remember Elisha's words to the king of Israel, who had not the faith that could rightly use the arrows of Israel's deliverance. In order to win perseverance, prayer must persevere. It is, after describing all the parts of a Christian's armour,—the girdle of truth, the breastplate of righteousness, the sandals of preparation, the shield of faith, the helmet of salvation, the sword of the Spirit,—that the Apostle adds: "Praying alway, with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance." That is the most important point, practically speaking, of all.

And, lastly, perseverance is especially assisted by keeping the mind fixed as much as possible on the end of life, and on that which follows it. Only let us reflect that death is as certain for each one of us as its time, its immediate cause, its attendant circumstances, are matters of uncertainty, and we begin to see this life and what belongs to it in its true aspects and proportions. We learn to set lightly about it, and to embark something less than the best half of our hearts in its concerns and its interests. The shore may still be distant, but the sailor keeps his eye on it as he prays for the skill and the strength to weather the passing storm. On those heights, which are beyond the Valley of Death, the eyes of the predestinate constantly rest, and the sight sustains them in times of trouble, of darkness, of despair, which were otherwise fatal.

"I had fainted, unless I had believed to see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living." The end, brethren, is indeed well worth the effort; and since we are in the hands of infinite love, the effort will be enduring if the end be kept steadily in view.

St. James's Day.

Ye shall drink indeed of My cup, and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with: but to sit on My right hand, and on My left, is not Mine to give, but it shall be given to them for whom it is prepared of My Father.—*St. Matthew* xx. 23.

SIT down and take thy fill of joy
At God's right hand, a bidden guest,
Drink of the cup that cannot cloy,
Eat of the bread that cannot waste.
O great Apostle! rightly now
Thou readest all thy Saviour meant,
What time His grave yet gentle brow
In sweet reproof on thee was bent.

"Seek ye to sit enthroned by Me?
Alas! ye know not what ye ask;
The first in shame and agony,
The lowest in the meanest task—
This can ye be? and can ye drink
The cup that I in tears must steep,
Nor from the 'whelming waters shrink
That o'er Me roll so dark and deep?"

"We can—Thine are we, dearest Lord,
In glory and in agony,
To do and suffer all Thy word;
Only be Thou for ever nigh."—
"Then be it so—My cup receive,
And of My woes baptismal taste:
But for the crown, that angels weave
For those next Me in glory placed,

"I give it not by partial love;
But in My Father's book are writ

What names on earth shall lowliest prove,
That they in heaven may highest sit."
Take up the lesson, O my heart:
Thou Lord of meekness, write it there,
Thine own meek self to me impart,
Thy lofty hope, Thy lowly prayer:

If ever on the mount with Thee
I seem to soar in vision bright,
With thoughts of coming agony,[1]
Stay Thou the too presumptuous flight;
Gently along the vale of tears
Lead me from Tabor's sunbright steep,
Let me not grudge a few short years
With Thee toward Heaven to walk and weep:

Too happy, on my silent path,
If now and then allowed, with Thee
Watching some placid holy death,
Thy secret work of love to see;
But, oh! most happy, should Thy call,
Thy welcome call, at last be given—
"Come where thou long hast stored thy all,
Come see thy place prepared in Heaven."

THE TRANSFIGURATION.

The Transfiguration did not merely vindicate the character of Christ's religion from the unworthy estimate of contemporary Jews; it marked Christianity as a distinctly supernatural religion. We can conceive a Chris-

[1] *St. Matthew* xvii. 12. "Likewise shall also the Son of Man suffer of them." This was just after the Transfiguration.

tianity, so to call it, which might have been merely natural. Nay, many men in our day have tried to persuade themselves that Apostolic Christianity was really of this character. A Christ who had been born into the world like you and me, not of a virgin mother; a Christ who had been a teacher of unrivalled impressiveness, yet had worked no miracles; a Christ who had been crucified as a great witness-bearer to truth, yet had never risen from His grave; a Christ who had made men think by the questions He asked them, as did Socrates; who had endowed them for ages with a stock of wise precepts, as did Confucius; or had even won them, by His sweet, æsthetic example, to gentle and self-denying habits, as after his fashion, did Sakya-muni, working altogether within the limits assigned to man's nature and mother wit—such a Christ might have founded a natural religion; but it would have been a religion differing altogether from the Christianity of the Gospels. The important point in such a religion would have been the teacher's activity, not himself; and, except in respect of the higher excellence of his teaching, he would have in no way differed from the masters who ruled at the time in the Jewish schools. The transfiguration of such a teacher as this, if we could have imagined it, would have been strangely out of character, strangely misleading; it would have had about it an air of pretence and self-advertisement, even if we were not driven to suspect in it something beyond, something darker; but that the Author and centre of a supernatural creed should be thus visibly irradiated before the eyes of His servants with an unearthly glory is, to say the least, not surprising. It is not surprising that such an attestation should be given to One who was not merely the greatest of teachers, but the Author and channel of redemption and grace. Certainly the

Transfiguration does not stand alone as showing the real character of Christianity; but it does display that character in a very vivid way; and this investure of the human form of our Lord with a robe of heavenly light, that Voice from the skies, that conversation with the Divine Master with the august figure of another age, all these must have borne in upon the minds of the apostles the true supernatural character of their Master's religion, and have prompted the exclamation, "Lord, it is good for us to be here."

We live in an age when this distinction between nature and the supernatural, between that which falls fairly within the province of sense, of reason, and that which lies beyond it, has largely faded from the minds of men. For many a man now-a-days there is, I fear, no supernatural, there is only nature: "Religion, if it is to go on at all, must," he would say, "find its object in nature, not beyond it. The occult powers and forces of nature, the mysterious secrets which underlie growth and decay, and life and death here, is the object of experimental religion." This, if we will, may still be called God; but a God who transcends the world which His hands had made, this the modern spirit very often will not have. "If religion needs such a God as this for its object, so much the worse," it says, "for religion;" and yet if any one thing is certain, it is that a God thus distinct from nature can alone, in the long run, be the object of the worship and love of the human soul. The worship of the hidden powers and forces of nature is no new thing in the history of the human mind. The Baal-worship, of which we read in the Old Testament, disfigured as it was by cruelty and lust, was in origin and principle a worship of the productive powers of nature personified as deities; and the same effect on human

character would follow in our own day as then, even if we had no rites and no temples like those of Carthage and of Tyre. The human soul requires an object above this world; and if it is to rise beyond sense and passion to the true height of its destiny, it cannot live on a merely natural religion—it demands the supernatural. The Transfiguration of Jesus Christ was a proclamation to the world that Christianity does answer to this demand; and it is good for us to rest in His sacred presence, because while He wears our nature He infinitely transcends it. "Lord, it is good for us to be here."

And, once more, the Transfiguration was a scene of glory; but it was something more—it was a preparation for a scene of suffering. The apostles were permitted to hear what passed between our Lord and Moses and Elijah. The words uttered did not refer to those future triumphs of our Saviour, so far as we know, to which in itself the Transfiguration so naturally pointed. They "spoke of his decease, which he should accomplish at Jerusalem." Does not this show us the true use of a time of prosperity, whether in material or in spiritual things? It is given to us—given, we may dare to say, almost always that we may prepare for a time of trial. Thus it is with nations. Years of peace and plenty, years of increasing revenue, and settled affairs at home and abroad, time and opportunity, are the times in which to think of a possible reverse of these blessings, and to prepare to meet it. Thus it is with men. The days of health, and youth, and vigour, of mental activity, of masterful resolves, are the days in which to form plans for the evening of life, when strength must decay and opportunities become few. And thus it is with the human soul. The seasons of brightness of spirit and elasticity of will, of warmth and expansion of affection, of joy in

the felt presence of God, joy in prayer, joy in communion, of peace and elevation of the inmost life, these great, these unspeakable blessings are granted, not that they are to be assumed to be beyond the risk of forfeiture, but that they may be turned to good, permanent good. On the Mount of Transfiguration we should always hear whispers of the Mount of Calvary. One moment solemn, inevitable, awful, inconceivable—the moment of death awaits us all, and our highest enjoyments of God's presence in this life are meant to enable us to meet it. Of this, too, the apostles may well have had a presentiment. In view of their Master's coming suffering, and of their own, how natural was it for them to cry, "Lord, it is good for us to be here!"

St. Bartholomew.

Jesus answered and said unto him, Because I said unto thee, I saw thee under the fig-tree, believest thou? thou shalt see greater things than these.—*St. John* i. 50.

Hold up thy mirror to the sun,
And thou shalt need an eagle's gaze,
So perfectly the polished stone
Gives back the glory of his rays:

Turn it, and it shall paint as true
The soft green of the vernal earth,
And each small flower of bashful hue,
That closest hides its lowly birth.

Our mirror is a blessèd book,
Where out from each illumined page
We see one glorious Image look
All eyes to dazzle and engage,

The Son of God: and that indeed
We see Him as He is, we know,
Since in the same bright glass we read
The very life of things below.—

Eye of God's word![1] where'er we turn
Ever upon us! thy keen gaze
Can all the depths of sin discern,
Unravel every bosom's maze:

Who that has felt thy glance of dread
Thrill through his heart's remotest cells,
About his path, about his bed,
Can doubt what spirit in thee dwells?

"What word is this? Whence know'st thou me?"
All wondering cries the humbled heart,
To hear thee that deep mystery,
The knowledge of itself, impart.

The veil is raised; who runs may read,
By its own light the truth is seen,
And soon the Israelite indeed
Bows down to adore the Nazarene.

So did Nathanael, guileless man,
At once, not shamefaced or afraid,
Owning Him God, who so could scan
His musings in the lonely shade;

[1] "The position before us is, that we ourselves, and such as we, are the very persons whom Scripture speaks of, and to whom, as men, in every variety of persuasive form, it makes its condescending though celestial appeal. The point worthy of observation is, to note how a book of the description and the compass which we have represented Scripture to be, possesses this versatility of power; *this eye like that of a portrait, uniformly fixed upon us, turn where we will.*"—*Miller's Bampton Lectures*, p. 128.

In his own pleasant fig-tree's shade,
Which by his household fountain grew,
Where at noonday his prayer he made
To know God better than he knew.

Oh! happy hours of heavenward thought!
How richly crowned! how well improved!
In musing o'er the Law he taught,
In waiting for the Lord he loved.

We must not mar with earthly praise
What God's approving word hath sealed;
Enough, if right our feeble rays
Take up the promise He revealed;

"The child-like faith, that asks not sight,
Waits not for wonder or for sign,
Believes, because it loves, aright—
Shall see things greater, things divine.

"Heaven to that gaze shall open wide,
And brightest angels to and fro
On messages of love shall glide
'Twixt God above and Christ below."

So still the guileless man is blest,
To him all crooked paths are straight,
Him on his way to endless rest
Fresh, ever-growing strengths await.[1]

God's witnesses, a glorious host,
Compass him daily like a cloud;
Martyrs and seers, the saved and lost,
Mercies and judgments cry aloud.

[1] They go from strength to strength.—*Ps.* lxxxiv. 7.

Yet shall to him the still small voice
That first into his bosom found
A way, and fixed his wavering choice,
Nearest and dearest ever sound.

The Collect.

O ALMIGHTY AND EVERLASTING GOD, who didst give to thine Apostle Bartholomew grace truly to believe and preach thy Word; Grant, we beseech thee, unto thy Church, to love that Word which he believed, and both to preach and receive the same; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

THE MAJESTY OF SCRIPTURE.

The majesty of Scripture is recognised by man wherever there is, I will not say a spiritual faculty, but a natural sense of beauty. The "sound" of the wind is perceived by the trained ear, by the literary taste, by the refinement, by the humanity of every generation of educated men. But what beyond? What of its spiritual source, its spiritual drift and purpose, its half-concealed but profound unities, its subtle but imperious relations to conscience? Of these things, so precious to Christians, a purely literary appreciation of Scripture is generally ignorant; the sacred book, like the prophet of the Chebar, is only "as a very lovely song of one that hath a pleasant voice, and can play well upon an instrument." Or again: "The sound thereof is heard in the admitted empire of the Bible over millions of hearts and consciences, an empire the evidences of which strikes upon the ear in countless ways, and which is far too wide and too secure to be affected by the criticisms that might occasionally seem to threaten it. What is the secret of this influence of Scripture? Not

simply that it is the Book of Revelation, since it contains a great deal of matter which lay fairly within the reach of man's natural faculties. The Word, or Eternal Reason of God, is the Revealer: but Scripture, whether it is a record of Divine revelations or of naturally-observed facts, is, in the belief of the Christian Church, throughout "inspired" by the Spirit. Inspiration is the word which describes the presence and action of the Holy Spirit everywhere in Scripture.

St. Matthew.

And after these things He went forth, and saw a publican, named Levi, sitting at the receipt of custom: and He said unto him, Follow Me. And he left all, rose up, and followed Him.—*St. Luke* v. 27, 28.

Ye hermits blest, ye holy maids,
The nearest Heaven on earth,
Who talk with God in shadowy glades,
Free from rude care and mirth;
To whom some viewless teacher brings
The secret lore of rural things,
The moral of each fleeting cloud and gale,
The whispers from above, that haunt the twilight vale:

Say, when in pity ye have gazed
On the wreathed smoke afar,
That o'er some town, like mist upraised,
Hung hiding sun and star,
Then as ye turned your weary eye
To the green earth and open sky,
Were ye not fain to doubt how Faith could dwell
Amid that dreary glare, in this world's citadel?

But Love's a flower that will not die
For lack of leafy screen,

And Christian Hope can cheer the eye
That ne'er saw vernal green;
Then be ye sure that Love can bless
E'en in this crowded loneliness,
Where ever-moving myriads seem to say,
Go—thou art naught to us, nor we to thee—away!

There are in this loud stunning tide
Of human care and crime,
With whom the melodies abide
Of the everlasting chime;
Who carry music in their heart
Through dusky lane and wrangling mart,
Plying their daily task with busier feet,
Because their secret souls a holy strain repeat.

How sweet to them, in such brief rest
As thronging cares afford,
In thought to wander, fancy blest,
To where their gracious Lord,
In vain, to win proud Pharisees,
Spake, and was heard by fell disease [1]—
But not in vain, beside yon breezy lake,
Bade the meek Publican his gainful seat forsake:

At once he rose, and left his gold;
His treasure and his heart
Transferred, where he shall safe behold
Earth and her idols part;
While he beside his endless store
Shall sit, and floods unceasing pour
Of Christ's true riches o'er all time and space,
First angel of His Church, first steward of His Grace.

[1] It seems from St. Matthew ix. 8, 9, that the calling of Levi took place immediately after the healing of the paralytic in the presence of the Pharisees.

Nor can ye not delight to think [1]
Where He vouchsafed to eat,
How the Most Holy did not shrink
From touch of sinner's meat;
What worldly hearts and hearts impure
Went with Him through the rich man's door,
That we might learn of Him lost souls to love,
And view his least and worst with hope to meet above.

These gracious lines shed Gospel light
On Mammon's gloomiest cells,
As on some city's cheerless night
The tide of sunrise swells,
Till tower, and dome, and bridge-way proud
Are mantled with a golden cloud,
And to wise hearts this certain hope is given;
"No mist that man may raise, shall hide the eye of Heaven."

And oh! if e'en on Babel shine
Such gleams of Paradise,
Should not their peace be peace divine,
Who day by day arise
To look on clearer heavens, and scan
The work of God untouched by man?
Shame on us, who about us Babel bear,
And live in Paradise, as if God was not there.

The Collect.

O Almighty God, who by thy blessed Son didst call Matthew from the receipt of custom, to be an Apostle and Evangelist; Grant us grace to forsake all covetous desires, and inordinate love of riches, and to follow the same thy Son Jesus Christ, who liveth and reigneth with thee and the Holy Ghost, one God, world without end. *Amen.*

[1] St. Matthew ix. 10.

WALKING WITH GOD.

The life of the early patriarchs is described as "a walking with God," a continuous reference in thought and aspiration to the Father above, Who yet was so near them. And after the Mosaic law had been given, when the idea and range of sin had been deepened and extended in the mind of Israel, we find prayer organised in a system of sacrifices, suited to various wants and moods of the human soul, consciously dealing with God as the King, both of the sacred nation and the individual conscience. Penitence, thanksgiving, intercession, adoration, each found an appropriate expression. Later still, in the Psalter, prayer—the purest, the loftiest, the most passionate—took shape in imperishable forms; and when at length a new revelation was made in Jesus Christ, there was little to add to what was already believed as to the power and obligation of prayer, beyond revealing the secret of its acceptance. Our Lord's precepts and example are sufficiently emphatic; and His Apostles appear to represent prayer, not so much as a practice of the Christian life, as its very breath and instinctive movement. The Christian must be "continuing instant in prayer;" he must "pray without ceasing."

St. Michael and all Angels.

Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation?—*Hebrews* i. 14.

Ye stars that round the Sun of righteousness
In glorious order roll,
With harps for ever strung, ready to bless
God for each rescued soul,

Ye eagle spirits, that build in light divine,
Oh! think of us to-day,
Faint warblers of this earth, that would combine
Our trembling notes with your accepted lay.

Your amarant wreaths were earned; and homeward all
Flushed with victorious might,
Ye might have sped to keep high festival,
And revel in the light;
But meeting us, weak worldlings, on our way,
Tired ere the fight begun,
Ye turned to help us in the unequal fray,
Remembering Whose we were, how dearly won:

Remembering Bethlehem, and that glorious night
When ye, who used to soar
Diverse along all space in fiery flight,
Came thronging to adore
Your God new-born, and made a sinner's child;
As if the stars should leave
Their stations in the far ethereal wild,
And round the sun a radiant circle weave.

Nor less your lay of triumph greeted fair
Our Champion and your King,
In that first strife, whence Satan in despair
Sank down on scathèd wing:
Alone He fasted, and alone He fought;
But when His toils were o'er,
Ye to the sacred Hermit duteous brought
Banquet and hymn, your Eden's festal store.

Ye too, when lowest in the abyss of woe
He plunged to save His sheep,
Were leaning from your golden thrones to know
The secrets of that deep:

But clouds were on His sorrow: one alone
His agonising call
Summoned from heaven, to still that bitterest groan,
And comfort Him, the Comforter of all.

Oh! highest favoured of all Spirits create
(If right of thee we deem),
How didst thou glide on brightening wing elate
To meet the unclouded beam
Of Jesus from the couch of darkness rising:
How swelled thine anthem's sound,
With fear and mightier joy weak hearts surprising,
"Your God is risen, and may not here be found;"

Pass a few days, and this dull darkling globe
Must yield Him from her sight;—
Brighter and brighter streams His glory-robe,
And He is lost in light.
Then, when through yonder everlasting arch,
Ye in innumerous choir
Poured, heralding Messiah's conquering march,
Lingered around His skirts two forms of fire:

With us they stayed, high warning to impart;
"The Christ shall come again
E'en as He goes; with the same human heart,
With the same godlike train."—
Oh! jealous God! how could a sinner dare
Think on that dreadful day,
But that with all Thy wounds Thou wilt be there,
And all our angel friends to bring Thee on Thy way?

Since to Thy little ones is given such grace,
That they who nearest stand
Alway to God in Heaven, and see His face,
Go forth at His command,

To wait around our path in weal or woe,
As erst upon our King,
Set Thy baptismal seal upon our brow,
And waft us heavenward with enfolding wing:

Grant, Lord, that when around the expiring world
Our seraph guardians wait,
While on her death-bed, ere to ruin hurled,
She owns Thee, all too late,
They to their charge may turn, and thankful see
Thy mark upon us still;
Then altogether rise, and reign with Thee,
And all their holy joy o'er contrite hearts fulfil!

The Collect.

O EVERLASTING GOD, who hast ordained and constituted the services of Angels and men in a wonderful order; Mercifully grant, that as thy holy Angels alway do thee service in heaven, so by thy appointment they may succour and defend us on earth; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

ANGELIC MINISTRATION.

We know, of course, that we, with no kind of deserts of our own, but simply through the free beneficence of our God, are placed at the head of His creation; we feel, each one of us, in the full consciousness of our manhood, that powers and capacities for enjoyment have been given us which none of the lower creatures at all share; but is it to be supposed that life which ascends by a series of gradations, each one of which we can trace minutely up to ourselves, stops with us? I submit, in reason, it is improbable. But perhaps you will say we don't see the

angels, and that our conception of the range of life is limited by our experience. It is true we do not see the angels; but there are a great many things in this world of nature of the existence of which you are perfectly certain, but which you do not see. For instance, that most mysterious principle of growth, which every spring of every year unfolds itself before your eyes, you do not see it. You see its products in the leaves which one after another come out before your eyes; but you do not see the active principle which produces them. Then there is that mysterious agent which we call electricity. You are able, to a certain extent, to take that wondrous power of nature in hand and make it subservient to your will by means of the telegraph. But you do not see the electricity. You are certain it is there. It is a great nature-power. You can control it, and make it, under certain conditions, do your bidding. You have no doubt of its existence; but whoever saw the electric fluid? And so it is with angelic intelligences, only as to them we repose, not upon the word of science, but upon the word of faith. Revelation is full of them from first to last. The Bible, if I may so speak, begins and ends with angels. It begins with the cherubims placed as guards at the gates of heaven, and ends with the angel of the Apocalypse, who gives his last commission to St. John, and bids him seal it up. And from first to last, throughout the book of God, His greatest servants are in communication with those angelic beings. One after another, the patriarchs, if I may so venture to put it, are familiar with them. Abraham meeting three angels, who imaged to him, in a kind of indistinct prophecy, the blessed Trinity; Jacob wrestling in prayer with the angel at Peniel—these are the types of what was common in that ancient age. But there was one of those beings, as it would seem from the

Scriptures, superior to the rest, and invested with a commission altogether special; who is sometimes termed the angel of the Lord, and sometimes the angel of the covenant, whose high prerogative it was to represent to the chosen people the Deity Himself. He precedes them, leads them, guards them, as the captain of the host with Joshua; he becomes the Shechina in the Tabernacle and the Temple. In point of fact, if you look through the Old Testament, you will find that angels are alternately the ministers of God's grace and mercy and of His vengeance. It is an angel who, when the patriarch Abraham is on the point of sacrificing his own son, discovers to him the ram in the thicket. They are two angels who guide Lot out of the condemned city of Sodom. It is an angel who goes before the chosen people Israel out of Egypt. It is an angel who brings Daniel food in the den of lions. It is an angel, as we read in the second lesson this evening, who delivers St. Peter out of the prison into which Herod had thrown him. Sometimes they are the ministers of God's righteous judgments. They stand, as you heard just now, at the gates of Paradise with flaming swords, and they smite the citizens of Sodom for their accursed sin with blindness. It is an angel who smites with the pestilence of God a hundred and eighty thousand Assyrians. They are angels who will accompany our Lord and Saviour when He comes to judgment, and who will gather out of His kingdom, as He Himself has told us, all things that offend and all them that work iniquity. They are indeed the ministers of God in His active, governing providence in this lower world, and they are ranged round His throne in perpetual, uninterrupted, devoted worship.

St. Luke.

Luke, the beloved physician, and Demas, greet you.—*Col.* iv. 14.
Demas hath forsaken me, having loved this present world . . . Only Luke is with me.—2 *Timothy* iv. 10, 11.

Two clouds before the summer gale
In equal race fleet o'er the sky;
Two flowers, when wintry blasts assail,
Together pine, together die.

But two capricious human hearts—
No sage's rod may track their ways,
No eye pursue their lawless starts
Along their wild self-chosen maze.

He only by whose sovereign hand
Even sinners for the evil day[1]
Were made—who rules the world He planned,
Turning our worst His own good way;

He only can the cause reveal,
Why, at the same fond bosom fed,
Taught in the self-same lap to kneel
Till the same prayer were duly said,

Brothers in blood and nurture too,
Aliens in heart so oft should prove;
One lose, the other keep, Heaven's clue;
One dwell in wrath and one in love.

He only knows,—for He can read
The mystery of the wicked heart,—

[1] "The Lord hath made all things for Himself: yea, even the wicked for the day of evil."—*Proverbs* xvi. 4.

Why vainly oft our arrows speed
When aimed with most unerring art;

While from some rude and powerless arm
A random shaft in season sent
Shall light upon some lurking harm,
And work some wonder little meant.

Doubt we, how souls so wanton change,
Leaving their own experienced rest?
Need not around the world to range;
One narrow cell may teach us best.

Look in, and see Christ's chosen saint
In triumph wear his Christ-like chain:
No fear lest he should swerve or faint;
"His life is Christ, his death is gain." [1]

Two converts, watching by his side,
Alike his love and greetings share;
Luke the beloved, the sick soul's guide,
And Demas, named in faltering prayer.

Pass a few years—look in once more—
The saint is in his bonds again;
Save that his hopes more boldly soar,[2]
He and his lot unchanged remain.

But only Luke is with him now:—
Alas! that e'en the martyr's cell,
Heaven's very gate, should scope allow
For the false world's seducing spell.

[1] Philippians i. 21.

[2] In the Epistle to the Philippians, "I know that I shall abide and continue with you all: . . . I count not myself to have apprehended.'—Chap. i. 25; iii. 13.

In 2 Timothy, "I have finished my course," &c.—Chap. iv. 7, 8.

'Tis sad,—but yet 'tis well, be sure,
We on the sight should muse awhile,
Nor deem our shelter all secure
Even in the Church's holiest aisle.

Vainly before the shrine he bends,
Who knows not the true pilgrim's part;
The martyr's cell no safety lends
To him, who wants the martyr's heart.

But if there be, who follows Paul
As Paul his Lord, in life and death,
Where'er an aching heart may call,
Ready to speed and take no breath;

Whose joy is, to the wandering sheep
To tell of the great Shepherd's love;[1]
To learn of mourners while they weep
The music that makes mirth above;

Who makes the Saviour all his theme,
The Gospel all his pride and praise—
Approach: for thou canst feel the gleam
That round the martyr's death-bed plays:

Thou hast an ear for angels' songs,
A breath the Gospel trump to fill,
And taught by thee the Church prolongs
Her hymns of high thanksgiving still.[2]

Ah! dearest mother, since too oft
The world yet wins some Demas frail

[1] The Gospel of St. Luke abounds most in such passages as the parable of the lost sheep, which display God's mercy to penitent sinners.

[2] The Christian hymns are all in St. Luke: the Magnificat, Benedictus, and Nunc Dimittis.

Even from thine arms, so kind and soft,
May thy tried comforts never fail!

When faithless ones forsake thy wing,
Be it vouchsafed thee still to see
Thy true, fond nurslings closer cling,
Cling closer to their Lord and thee.

The Collect.

ALMIGHTY GOD, who calledst Luke the Physician, whose praise is in the Gospel, to be an Evangelist, and Physician of the soul; May it please thee, that, by the wholesome medicines of the doctrine delivered by him, all the disease of our souls may be healed; through the merits of thy Son Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

CHRISTIAN HYMNODY.

It is clear that Christian hymnody has ever been prized and hated for its services in popularising the worship of Jesus Christ. Hymnody actively educates, while it partially satisfies the instinct of worship. It is a less formal and sustained act of worship than prayer, yet it may really involve transient acts of the deepest adoration. But because it is less formal, because in using it the soul can pass, as it were, unobserved and at will from mere sympathetic states of feeling to adoration, and from adoration back to passive although reverent sympathy. Hymnody has always been a popular instrument for the expression of religious feeling; and from the first years of Christianity it seems to have been especially consecrated to the honour of the Redeemer.

St. Simon and St. Jude.

That ye should earnestly contend for[1] the faith which was once delivered unto the saints.—*St. Jude* 3.

SEEST thou, how tearful and alone,
And drooping like a wounded dove,
The Cross in sight, but Jesus gone,
The widowed Church is fain to rove?

Who is at hand that loves the Lord?[2]
Make haste, and take her home, and bring
Thine household choir, in true accord
Their soothing hymns for her to sing.

Soft on her fluttering heart shall breathe
The fragrance of that genial isle;
There she may weave her funeral wreath,
And to her own sad music smile.

The Spirit of the dying Son
Is there, and fills the holy place
With records sweet of duties done,
Of pardoned foes, and cherished grace.

And as of old by two and two[3]
His herald saints the Saviour sent
To soften hearts like morning dew,
Where He to shine in mercy meant;

[1] ἐπαγωνίζεσθαι: "be very anxious for it;" "feel for it as for a friend in jeopardy."

[2] Then saith He to the disciple, Behold thy mother! And from that hour that disciple took her unto his own home.—*St. John* xix. 27.

[3] St. Mark vi. 7; St. Luke x. 1.

So evermore He deems His name
Best honoured and His way prepared,
When watching by His altar-flame
He sees His servants duly paired.

He loves when age and youth are met,
Fervent old age and youth serene,
Their high and low in concord set
For sacred song, Joy's golden mean.

He loves when some clear soaring mind
Is drawn by mutual piety
To simple souls and unrefined,
Who in life's shadiest covert lie.

Or if perchance a saddened heart
That once was gay and felt the spring,
Cons slowly o'er its altered part,
In sorrow and remorse to sing,

Thy gracious care will send that way
Some spirit full of glee, yet taught
To bear the sight of dull decay,
And nurse it with all-pitying thought:

Cheerful as soaring lark, and mild
As evening blackbird's full-toned lay
When the relenting sun has smiled
Bright through a whole December day.

These are the tones to brace and cheer
The lonely watcher of the fold,
When nights are dark, and foemen near,
When visions fade and hearts grow cold.

How timely then a comrade's song
Comes floating on the mountain air,
And bids thee yet be bold and strong—
Fancy may die, but Faith is there.

The Collect.

O Almighty God, who hast built thy Church upon the foundation of the Apostles and Prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the head corner-stone; Grant us so to be joined together in unity of spirit by their doctrine, that we may be made an holy temple, acceptable unto thee; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

STRONG MOTIVES.

We need motives, strong motives, one and all of us. We need them for purposes of action, and for purposes of dogged resistance. We need them to counteract all that gives way and depresses from within, and to oppose all that would crush our wills into culpable acquiescence from without. A few strong motives, perhaps, are better than many weak ones. A few primal truths, to us clear, indisputable, cogent, again and again examined and proved and burnished like well-proved weapons by an admiration which will not tire of handling them, and held up to view, ever and anon, that their form and polish may be duly honoured in the sunshine of truth; and then only laid up where they can be seen by the soul's quick eye, at the moment when they are needed for action;—these are assuredly part of the inner furniture of every Christian who hopes to pass through this world without forfeiting the next.

All Saints' Day.

Hurt not the earth, neither the sea, nor the trees, till we have sealed the servants of our God in their foreheads.—*Revelation* vii. 3.

Why blowest thou not, thou wintry wind
Now every leaf is brown and sere,
And idly droops, to thee resigned,
The fading chaplet of the year?
Yet wears the pure aerial sky
Her summer veil, half drawn on high,
Of silvery haze, and dark and still
The shadows sleep on every slanting hill

How quiet shows the woodland scene
Each flower and tree, its duty done.
Reposing in decay serene,
Like weary men when age is won.
Such calm old age as conscience pure
And self-commanding hearts ensure,
Waiting their summons to the sky,
Content to live, but not afraid to die.

Sure if our eyes were purged to trace
God's unseen armies hovering round,
We should behold by angel's grace
The four strong winds of Heaven fast bound,
Their downward sweep a moment stayed
On ocean cove and forest glade,
Till the last flower of autumn shed
Her funeral odours on her dying bed.

So in Thine awful armoury, Lord,
The lightnings of the judgment day

Pause yet awhile, in mercy stored,
Till willing hearts wear quite away
Their earthly stains; and spotless shine
On every brow in light divine
The Cross by angel hands impressed,
The seal of glory won and pledge of promised rest.

Little they dream, those haughty souls
Whom empires own with bended knee,
What lowly fate their own controls,
Together linked by Heaven's decree;—
As bloodhounds hush their baying wild
To wanton with some fearless child,
So Famine waits, and War with greedy eyes,
Till some repenting heart be ready for the skies.

Think ye the spires that glow so bright
In front of yonder setting sun,
Stand by their own unshaken might?
No—where the upholding grace is won,
We dare not ask, nor Heaven would tell,
But sure from many a hidden dell,
From many a rural nook unthought of there,
Rises for that proud world the saints' prevailing prayer.

On, Champions blest, in Jesus' name,
Short be your strife, your triumph full,
Till every heart have caught your flame,
And, lightened of the world's misrule,
Ye soar those elder saints to meet,
Gathered long since at Jesus' feet,
No world of passions to destroy,
Your prayers and struggles o'er, your task all praise and joy.

The Collect.

O ALMIGHTY GOD, who hast knit together thine elect in one communion and fellowship, in the mystical body of thy Son Christ our Lord; Grant us grace so to follow thy blessed Saints in all virtuous and godly living, that we may come to those unspeakable joys, which thou hast prepared for them that unfeignedly love thee; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

MAN'S REAL PROGRESS.

Comprehend your matchless dignity in your Creator's world. Each of you *has*, nay rather each of you *is*, that with which nothing material, be it force, or magnitude, or law, be it fluid or mineral, be it atom or planet, can rightly challenge comparison. Each of you is, in the depth of his personality, a spiritual substance. This substance is without extent, without form, without colour, unseen, impalpable. This substance is so subtle that, in its mysterious and inaccessible retreats, it can be detected neither by the knife of the anatomist nor by the keen observation of the psychologist. This substance is so living and strong, that each member, each nerve of your body, each fold, each tissue of your brain, is at once its instrument, and the proof of its presence, and its empire. The human soul! Who that has pondered, even superficially, over the mysterious depths of life within him—depths of which he knows so little, yet which are so intimately himself—can submit to the falsehood and degradation of the theory which makes man's real progress to consist of a mere succession in the external modifications of senseless matter?

Holy Communion.

O God of Mercy, God of Might,
How should pale sinners bear the sight,
If, as Thy power is surely here,
Thine open glory should appear!

For now Thy people are allowed
To scale the mount and pierce the cloud,
And Faith may feed her eager view
With wonders Sinai never knew.

Fresh from the atoning sacrifice,
The world's Creator bleeding lies,
That man, His foe, by whom He bled,
May take Him for His daily bread.

O agony of wavering thought
When sinners first so near are brought!
"It is my Maker—dare I stay?
My Saviour—dare I turn away?"

Thus while the storm is high within
'Twixt love of Christ and fear of sin,
Who can express the soothing charm,
To feel thy kind upholding arm,

My Mother Church? and hear thee tell
Of a world lost, yet loved so well,
That He, by whom the angels live,
His only Son for her would give?[1]

[1] "God so loved the world, that He gave His only-begotten Son." See the sentences in the Communion Service, after the Confession.

And doubt we yet? Thou call'st again;
A lower still, a sweeter strain;
A voice from Mercy's inmost shrine,
The very breath of Love divine.

Whispering it says to each apart,
"Come unto Me, thou trembling heart;"[1]
And we must hope, so sweet the tone,
The precious words are all our own.

Hear them, kind Saviour—hear Thy spouse
Low at Thy feet renew her vows;
Thine own dear promise she would plead
For us her true though fallen seed.

She pleads by all Thy mercies, told
Thy chosen witnesses of old,
Love's heralds sent to man forgiven,
One from the Cross, and one from Heaven.[2]

This, of true penitents the chief,
To the lost spirit brings relief,
Lifting on high the adorèd Name:—
"Sinners to save, Christ Jesus came."[3]

That, dearest of Thy bosom friends,
Into the wavering heart descends:—
"What? fallen again? yet cheerful rise,[4]
"Thine Intercessor never dies."

The eye of Faith, that waxes bright
Each moment by Thine altar's light,

[1] Come unto Me, all that travail, and are heavy laden, and I will refresh you.

[2] St. Paul and St. John.

[3] This is a true saying, and worthy of all men to be received, That Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners.

[4] If any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.

Sees them e'en now; they still abide
In mystery kneeling at our side;

And with them every spirit blest,
From realms of triumph or of rest,
From Him who saw creation's morn,
Of all Thine angels eldest born,

To the poor babe, who died to-day,
Take part in our thanksgiving lay,
Watching the tearful joy and calm,
While sinners taste Thine heavenly balm.

Sweet awful hour! the only sound
One gentle footstep gliding round,
Offering by turns on Jesus' part
The Cross to every hand and heart.

Refresh us, Lord, to hold it fast;
And when Thy veil is drawn at last,
Let us depart where shadows cease,
With words of blessing and of peace.

The Collect.

ALMIGHTY GOD, unto whom all hearts be open, all desires known, and from whom no secrets are hid; Cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of thy Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love thee, and worthily magnify thy holy Name; through Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

IMMORTALITY.

The sense of immortality may be gradually or violently killed out of the soul by the errors of depraved intellect; or it may be buried alive beneath the filth of animal indulgence. That soul must have parted company with its God which is indeed altogether enslaved

to matter. It is the willing accomplice of a body whose depredations sap the springs even of physical life. It hastily shuts its eyes with sensitive apprehension against the unwelcome shadow, against the dreaded presentiment, of an actual immortality. Truly, such a soul is in love with death. It is sinking lower and lower, deeper and deeper, into the moral and intellectual abyss.

. . . . . .

Can such a soul return? Can it rise? Undoubtedly. On this side of the grave there are no limits to the power of the grace of God. And as the soul rises it recovers its hold upon those glorious truths which it lost in its descent. Together with the sight of God, the sight of the true self returns. The sense of immortality is deepened by all that brings the personal soul, consciously, face to face with the personal God Who made it. The sense of immortality is deepened by penitence; for penitence is the sincere exercise of memory upon our past existence, under the guidance of the love of God. It is deepened by prayer; for prayer is the voice of the inmost being consciously speaking to its Maker. It is reinforced by such channels of the Divine Power as are the sacraments; the earliest Fathers spoke of the Eucharist, in allusion to the words of our Divine Lord, as "the salve of immortality."

Holy Baptism.

WHERE is it mothers learn their love?—
In every Church a fountain springs
O'er which the eternal Dove
Hovers on softest wings.

What sparkles in that lucid flood
Is water, by gross mortals eyed:
But seen by Faith, 'tis blood
Out of a dear Friend's side.

A few calm words of faith and prayer,
A few bright drops of holy dew,
Shall work a wonder there
Earth's charmers never knew.

O happy arms, where cradled lies,
And ready for the Lord's embrace,
That precious sacrifice,
The darling of His grace!

Blest eyes, that see the smiling gleam
Upon the slumbering features glow,
When the life-giving stream
Touches the tender brow!

Or when the holy cross is signed,
And the young soldier duly sworn
With true and fearless mind
To serve the Virgin-born.

But happiest ye, who sealed and blest
Back to your arms your treasure take,
With Jesus' mark impressed
To nurse for Jesus' sake:

To whom—as if in hallowed air
Ye knelt before some awful shrine—
His innocent gestures wear
A meaning half divine:

By whom Love's daily touch is seen
In strengthening form and freshening hue,
In the fixed brow serene,
The deep yet eager view.—

Who taught thy pure and even breath
To come and go with such sweet grace?
Whence thy reposing Faith,
Though in our frail embrace?

O tender gem, and full of Heaven!
Not in the twilight stars on high,
Not in moist flowers at even
See we our God so nigh.

Sweet one, make haste and know Him too,
Thine own adopting Father love,
That like thine earliest dew
Thy dying sweets may prove.

THE NAME "CHRISTIAN."

"I am a Christian." Try to say this solemnly each morning as you rise from sleep,—"I am a Christian, and therefore, O Lord Jesus Christ, do Thou enable me throughout this day to live for Thy glory." "I am a Christian." Try to say this solemnly each night ere you lie down to rest. "I am a Christian, and therefore, O Lord Jesus Christ, my thoughts and words and deeds during the past day must be judged by the standard of Thy revealed will; do Thou pardon my sins through Thy precious blood." "I am a Christian." Prepare to say this for the last time and at that moment when you feel the sure approach of death. "I am a Christian," and

therefore, O Lord Jesus Christ, sinner as I am, into Thy crucified hands I commend my spirit, for Thou hast redeemed me, O Lord God of truth."

Catechism.

Oh! say not, dream not, heavenly notes
To childish ears are vain,
That the young mind at random floats,
And cannot reach the strain.

Dim or unheard, the words may fall,
And yet the Heaven-taught mind
May learn the sacred air, and all
The harmony unwind.

Was not our Lord a little child,
Taught by degrees to pray,
By father dear and mother mild
Instructed day by day?

And loved He not of Heaven to talk
With children in His sight,
To meet them in His daily walk,
And to His arms invite?

What though around His throne of fire
The everlasting chant
Be wafted from the seraph choir
In glory jubilant?

Yet stoops He, ever pleased to mark
Our rude essays of love.

Faint as the pipe of wakening lark,
Heard by some twilight grove:

Yet is He near us, to survey
These bright and ordered files,
Like spring-flowers in their best array,
All silence and all smiles,

Save that each little voice in turn
Some glorious truth proclaims,
What sages would have died to learn,
Now taught by cottage dames.

And if some tones be false or low,
What are all prayers beneath
But cries of babes, that cannot know
Half the deep thought they breathe?

In His own words we Christ adore,
But angels, as we speak,
Higher above our meaning soar
Than we o'er children weak:

And yet His words mean more than they,
And yet He owns their praise:
Why should we think He turns away
From infants' simple lays?

THE POWER OF OUR INFLUENCE.

It is indeed a part of the inalienable dignity of the human soul that some influence, whether for good or evil, is inevitably exercised by each one of us—by the youngest, the weakest, the most illiterate. Often indeed this influence is so feeble or so subtle as to escape analysis, or

even to escape observation; but it is there, whether we can detect it or take it to pieces or not; and He to Whose eye the secrets of the moral world are open, and Who can take the full measure of its mysteries, has already in His Wisdom and His Love weighed and judged it.

Confirmation.

THE shadow of the Almighty's cloud
Calm on the tents of Israel lay,
While drooping paused twelve banners proud,
Till He arise and lead the way.

Then to the desert breeze unrolled
Cheerly the waving pennons fly,
Lion or eagle—each bright fold
A lodestar to a warrior's eye.

So should Thy champions, ere the strife,
By holy hands o'ershadowed, kneel;
So fearless for their charmèd life,
Bear, to the end, Thy Spirit's seal.

Steady and pure as stars that beam
In middle heaven, all mist above,
Seen deepest in the frozen stream:—
Such is their high courageous love.

And soft as pure, and warm as bright,
They brood upon life's peaceful hour,
As if the Dove that guides their flight
Shook from her plumes a downy shower.

Spirit of might and sweetness too!
Now leading on the wars of God,

Now to green isles of shade and dew
Turning the waste Thy people trod;

Draw, Holy Ghost, Thy sevenfold veil
Between us and the fires of youth;
Breathe, Holy Ghost, Thy freshening gale,
Our fevered brow in age to soothe.

And oft as sin and sorrow tire,
The hallowed hour do Thou renew,
When beckoned up the awful choir
By pastoral hands, t'ward Thee we drew;

When trembling at the sacred rail
We hid our eyes and held our breath,
Felt Thee how strong, our hearts how frail,
And longed to own Thee to the death.

For ever on our souls be traced
That blessing dear, that dove-like hand,
A sheltering rock in Memory's waste,
O'ershadowing all the weary land.

PERSEVERANCE.

Certainly we cannot think too highly of that great gift, perseverance to the end in the service of God. The Bible is full of it. It is the spirit of the Psalmist, "I will follow all mine enemies and overtake them, neither will I turn again until I have destroyed them." Its warrant is found in the Psalmist's acknowledgment, "He hath set my feet upon a rock, and ordered my goings." Its preciousness is implied in the apostle's rebuke to the Galatians, "Ye did run well; who did hinder you that ye should not obey the truth? This persuasion cometh

not of him that calleth you." Or in the wish expressed to the Hebrews, "That every one of you do show the same diligence to the full assurance of hope unto the end: that ye be not slothful, but followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises." Oh, how much lies in the one sentence of St. John—"Look to yourselves that ye lose not the things which ye have wrought, but that ye receive a full reward." "Whosoever goeth onward, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God; he that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, the same hath both the Father and the Son." And in these solemn words of Jesus Christ Himself, "He that endureth to the end, the same shall be saved." "No man, having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of heaven."

Yes, perseverance is a great gift of God; and, instead of assuming it has been given us, we do well to pray for it. Prayer is safe for such men as you and I—safer than expressions of confidence as to what we are, as to what we shall be, even though we acknowledge that it is only the grace of God which makes us what we are. The author of "The Christian Year" was once asked the question, "Ought not a Christian, when really united to Christ, to be able, if tempted, to say, as did Christ our Lord, 'Get thee behind me, Satan'?" "I should rather think it better"—this was the reply—"if he contented himself with praying, 'Lord, give such a sinner as I am grace to say, without presumption, "Get thee behind me, Satan."'"

Prayer keeps us in our proper place. Apart from the blessings, bodily and spiritual, which it brings to us, and which, so far as we know, are not otherwise to be had, prayer reminds us that we depend for being what we are, moment by moment, upon the grace of God, which pre-

vents our yielding to the constant and fatal inclination to think that we can become self-sufficing centres of moral and spiritual life. The very life of prayer is that one utterance of the Psalmist, "My soul hangeth upon Thee; Thy right hand hath upholden me."

Matrimony.

THERE is an awe in mortals' joy,
A deep mysterious fear
Half of the heart will still employ
As if we drew too near
To Eden's portal, and those fires
That bicker round in wavy spires,
Forbidding, to our frail desires,
What cost us once so dear.

We cower before the heart-searching eye
In rapture as in pain;
E'en wedded Love, till Thou be nigh,
Dares not believe her gain:
Then in the air she fearless springs,
The breath of Heaven beneath her wings,
And leaves her woodnote wild, and sings
A tuned and measured strain.

Ill fare the lay, though soft as dew
And free as air it fall,
That, with Thine altar full in view,
Thy votaries would enthrall
To a foul dream, of heathen night,
Litting her torch in Love's despite,
And scaring with base wild-fire light
The sacred nuptial hall.

Far other strains, far other fires,
Our marriage offering grace;
Welcome, all chaste and kind desires,
With even matron pace
Approaching down the hallowed aisle!
Where should ye seek Love's perfect smile,
But where your prayers were learned erewhile
In her own native place?

Where, but on His benignest brow,
Who waits to bless you here?
Living, He owned no nuptial vow,
No bower to Fancy dear:
Love's very self—for Him no need
To nurse, on earth, the heavenly seed:
Yet comfort in His eye we read
For bridal joy and fear.

'Tis He who clasps the marriage band,
And fits the spousal ring,
Then leaves ye kneeling, hand in hand,
Out of His stores to bring
His Father's dearest blessing, shed
Of old on Isaac's nuptial bed,
Now on the board before ye spread
Of our all-bounteous King.

All blessings of the breast and womb,
Of Heaven, and earth beneath,
Of converse, high, and sacred home,
Are yours, in life and death.
Only kneel on, nor turn away
From the pure shrine, where Christ to-day
Will store each flower, ye duteous lay,
For an eternal wreath.

OUR REAL SELVES.

That awful and blessed gift of life,—we only take its measure in the presence of death. Then only do we perceive that, whatever may be its length, it is but the moment upon which there hangs an eternity. What we are outwardly in this world, what men think or say of us, of our titles, of our incomes, or of the absence of them, all this matters but little; all these are levelled by death. But what we are in ourselves, in our consciences, our hopes, our affections and wills, before God our Father in heaven and His blessed Son our Divine Redeemer, this is a matter of an importance that is simply unspeakable, fraught to each one of us with consequences more lasting and momentous than the mind of man can conceive.

Visitation and Communion of the Sick.

O Youth and Joy, your airy tread
Too lightly springs by Sorrow's bed;
Your keen eye-glances are too bright,
Too restless for a sick man's sight.
Farewell; for one short life we part:
I rather woo the soothing art,
Which only souls in sufferings tried
Bear to their suffering brethren's side.

Where may we learn that gentle spell?
Mother of Martyrs, thou canst tell!
Thou, who didst watch thy dying Spouse
With pierced hands and bleeding brows,

Whose tears from age to age are shed
O'er sainted sons untimely dead,
If e'er we charm a soul in pain,
Thine is the key-note of our strain.

How sweet with thee to lift the latch,
Where Faith has kept her midnight watch,
Smiling on woe: with thee to kneel,
Where fixed, as if one prayer could heal,
She listens, till her pale eye glow
With joy wild health can never know,
And each calm feature, ere we read,
Speaks, silently, thy glorious Creed.

Such have I seen! and while they poured
Their hearts in every contrite word,
How have I rather longed to kneel
And ask of them sweet pardon's seal!
How blessed the heavenly music brought
By thee to aid my faltering thought!
"Peace" ere we kneel, and when we cease
To pray, the farewell word is "Peace."

I came again: the place was bright
"With something of celestial light"—
A simple altar by the bed
For high Communion meetly spread,
Chalice, and plate, and snowy vest.—
We ate and drank: then calmly blest,
All mourners, one with dying breath,
We sate and talked of Jesus' death.

Once more I came: the silent room
Was veiled in sadly-soothing gloom,
And ready for her last abode
The pale form like a lily showed,

By virgin fingers duly spread,
And prized for love of summer fled.
The light from those soft-smiling eyes
Had fleeted to its parent skies.

O soothe us, haunt us, night and day,
Ye gentle Spirits far away,
With whom we shared the cup of grace,
Then parted; ye to Christ's embrace,
We to the lonesome world again,
Yet mindful of the unearthly strain
Practised with you at Eden's door,
To be sung on, where angels soar,
With blended voices evermore.

THE EVER-PRESENT SENSE OF THE FUTURE LIFE.

With thousands of men there is no speculative difficulty as to the future life. The real speculative difficulty would be to suppose that such a force as the human mind could possibly be extinguished by the dissolution of the human body. And the resurrection of the human body is not more wonderful, because it is more unfamiliar, than its birth. But men who admit this still say, "How am I to acquire, and carry about with me, and act upon, this practical conviction, this ever-present sense of the future that awaits me? How am I to turn a speculative conclusion into a persuasion that shall sway, and mould, and completely influence my life? How am I to learn in this sense to say, 'I shall not die, but live, and declare the works of the Lord'?"

The answer must be, Give your conviction a chance of growing. A conviction of a working kind depends less upon exact processes of the intellect than upon

loyalty of the heart and will. If a man knows that a great earthly future is before him upon which he has not yet entered, he dwells on it in his leisure moments, and though his life be a busy one, he makes time to prepare for it. If you would have the Christian sense of living for eternity, allow time for it in your present life. We have spoken of Germany in the last century; it offers few more interesting characters than Haller, the great naturalist, who made physiology a science. Haller was professor at Gottingen, but his reputation and his activity were European; the Universities of Berlin, Stockholm, Copenhagen, St. Petersburg, Paris, Florence, Bologna, Padua, accounted it an honour to reckon him among their members; not merely German princes, but the Emperor Joseph II. eagerly sought his friendship. After his death a private diary was found, which shows how on every day in this busiest of lives, so constantly devoted to the scientific investigation of matter, time was made for communion with the Unseen, and for meditation on the Future. "Enable me to think," these are his words, "in this still hour, on eternity, and prize at their true worth the poor joys of this fleeting life." "May I not only know, but feel, that, if I have not peace with Thee my God, I have nothing; and that the most enjoyable of such lives is but a sad dream which eternity will end."

If a man has a serious conviction, he makes ventures on the strength of it, and these ventures in return strengthen, deepen, and broaden the conviction. Act as men who have eternity before you, and you will soon have no doubts about its reality. Especially is the sense of the future world strengthened and deepened by our accompanying the dying, so far as we may, on their journey towards it. The poet of "The Christian Year" notes this effect of joining in Communion with the sick,

in lines which are not easily forgotten, when once attention has been called to them :—

"O soothe us, haunt us, night and day,
Ye gentle spirits far away,
With whom we shared the cup of grace,
Then parted ; ye to Christ's embrace,
We to the lonesome world again,
Yet mindful of the unearthly strain
Practised with you at Eden's door,
To be sung on, where angels soar,
With blended voices, evermore."

All this will seem easy and natural, if, in the Apostle's words, we have "risen with Christ." The sense of immortality will be enfeebled and die away, should we constantly live as though this world alone were real and the other only a shadowy and distant uncertainty. But if, escaping from the grave of sense as well as the grave of sin, we retire like our Risen Lord from the sight of men, for communion with the Unseen; if, by His grace, we have the heart to turn away from the finite and the perishing to the Imperishable and the Infinite, we shall learn the lessons of eternity even during the hours of time, and shall know as others cannot know, that, whenever or however death may await us, we shall not die, but live, and shall hereafter, as now, declare the works of the Lord.

Burial of the Dead.

And when the Lord saw her, He had compassion on her, and said unto her, Weep not. And He came and touched the bier ; and they that bare him stood still. And He said, Young man, I say unto thee, Arise.—*St. Luke* vii. 13, 14.

WHO says, the wan autumnal sun
Beams with too faint a smile
To light up nature's face again,

And though the year be on the wane,
What thoughts of spring the heart beguile?

Waft him, thou soft September breeze,
And gently lay him down
Within some circling woodland wall,
Where bright leaves, reddening ere they fall,
Wave gaily o'er the waters brown.

And let some graceful arch be there
With wreathèd mullions proud,
With burnished ivy for its screen,
And moss, that glows as fresh and green
As though beneath an April cloud.—

Who says the widow's heart must break,
The childless mother sink?—
A kinder, truer voice I hear,
Which e'en beside that mournful bier,
Whence parents' eyes would hopeless shrink,

Bids weep no more—O heart bereft,
How strange, to thee, that sound!
A widow o'er her only son,
Feeling more bitterly alone
For friends that press officious round.

Yet is the voice of comfort heard,
For Christ hath touched the bier—
The bearers wait with wondering eye,
The swelling bosom dares not sigh,
But all is still, 'twixt hope and fear.

E'en such an awful soothing calm
We sometimes see alight
On Christian mourners, while they wait
In silence, by some churchyard gate,
Their summons to the holy rite.

And such the tones of love, which break
The stillness of that hour,
Quelling the embittered spirit's strife—
"The Resurrection and the Life
Am I: believe, and die no more."—

Unchanged that voice—and though not yet
The dead sit up and speak,
Answering its call; we gladlier rest
Our darlings on earth's quiet breast,
And our hearts feel they must not break.

Far better they should sleep awhile
Within the Church's shade,
Nor wake, until new heaven, new earth,
Meet for their new immortal birth,
For their abiding-place be made,

Than wander back to life, and lean
On our frail love once more.
'Tis sweet, as year by year we lose
Friends out of sight, in faith to muse
How grows in Paradise our store.

Then pass, ye mourners, cheerly on,
Through prayer unto the tomb,
Still, as ye watch life's falling leaf,
Gathering from every loss and grief
Hope of new spring and endless home.

Then cheerly to your work again
With hearts new-braced and set
To run, untired, love's blessèd race,
As meet for those, who face to face
Over the grave their Lord have met.

THE CHRISTIAN HORIZON.

For what is it that Christianity has done for mankind in respect of the most awful moment of our common destiny? It has done this: it has given us a broader and more distant horizon; death is merely a halting-place in the journey of existence, and Christ has bidden us look beyond it. Beyond those dark caverns, beyond those frowning heights in the immediate foreground of our view, we can catch the summits of a distant range upon which the sunshine rests unceasingly, and which we may if we will reach at last. For Christians indeed death is not without its awe, not most assuredly without a sorrow, which Christ Himself has shared and blessed; but it has had the sting of despair taken altogether out of it; the Christian dead, in the truest and most absolute sense, among the living; and there is a life of glory and honour in reserve even for the poor body, which for a while and so entirely death has humbled beneath his sway. "And I look for the resurrection of the dead," that is the faith of the whole Church of Jesus Christ. It is one department of her trust in the love of a Divine Saviour, "who shall change our body of humiliation, that it may be fashioned like unto His glorious body, according to the mighty working whereby He is able to subdue all things unto Himself."

SAVED THROUGH HOPE.

In different senses of the saying, men in all ages are saved through hope,—in other words, the anticipation of a better future is the leverage of their being. Even when it is only a dim future, resting not even upon human

assurances, but on some precarious calculation of possibilities, it is at times sufficient to mould a life. What was it that roused the young Hannibal to become the intrepid leader whom we meet in history but the prospect set before him when a boy, that one day he might avenge the wrongs of his country? What was it that has led discoverers like Columbus to attempt a perilous voyage into unknown seas but the reports of a land beyond which might possibly reward persevering enterprise? How have those other, and scarcely less noble, discoverers who have enriched our world with the gifts of science been nerved to their work but by the sustained expectation that there were secrets waiting to be wrung from nature if men would only seek them? How could even a John Howard have spent his days in what at first might well have seemed a thankless task, the rescue of thousands of prisoners from an aggravated wretchedness, and of society from the thoughtless barbarism which sanctioned it, had it not seemed to him to be within reach of his untiring philanthropy? What else indeed has supported all the men who have done most and best for their kind, under the pressure of difficulties and against appearances, but this faith in a possibly improved condition of things, for which they must needs labour, and for which they might well be content to wait? And if this be a true account of the matter, who shall call in question the moral importance of faith in a future life, or the immense moral loss which must result if it be renounced? That faith rests, as Christians believe, on stronger bases than any of the probabilities which in this life move good and enterprising men to vigorous action, and Christianity does the highest service to human nature here and now, when it tells man, without faltering and incessantly, that he has to live for another world.

THE WORLD TO COME.

For the social instinct, as for the need of a future, provision is made finally and adequately in the world to come. In that world there will be a reunion around the throne of Christ of all who have been separated here by the misunderstandings which are more or less inevitable in the twilight. The saintly characters, the high and pure intelligences, whose names are perhaps familiar to us, the outlines of whose thought or life have reached us through dim tradition, or whom we know through their writings, and have longed—as did St. Chrysostom when he read St. Paul—to have seen and heard in the flesh; these will be in that company. And others whom we ourselves have known in life, and who have passed away, and have never since on one single day been unremembered in our prayers, and have left in our memories an impression which is as fresh now as when they parted from us, and which will be what it is until we too lie down to die,—these too will be present in that vast assemblage as our fellow-citizens for ever, as members of the same great family of immortal beings. Is it conceivable that such a prospect of introduction to all who have been really great and noble among the sons of men should not influence those who enjoy it? Is it possible that they are living and acting only in the same moral world as are those for whom all that follows death is a dreary blank?

No, it is impossible. For closely allied to our desire for a future life, and for a purer association with other beings than we can here enjoy, is our desire for personal perfection. In some degree this passion lives in every human soul; if it has been trodden out or suffered to die away, it once was there; if it is too vague to have any

clear account to give of itself, it is not the less an original feature of our nature. It gives impulse to all that moves upward in human life; it inspires art, it reconstructs society, it endeavours to renew individual character. It is at once a pleasure and a torment, an enjoyment and a reproach, and it is never satisfied in this life—never.

THE JUDGMENT DAY.

Oh! Let us reflect upon it for one moment more. All whom we have ever known in past years, and who now are gone; all of whom we have caught only glimpses, whom we have seen on one occasion only in life; all those whose careers viewed from afar have interested or shocked us; all the most winning and lovable characters we have met; all the most selfish and repulsive—there they are hurrying onwards, as if in a confused and tangled multitude towards the tremendous scene of universal judgment. As with them so with ourselves. Be our outward circumstances what they may, our age, our birth, or prospects, the consideration we enjoy, the anxieties we feel, the hopes we cherish, one thing is certain; I and you, every one of us has to be judged. Well were it if, when we rise in the morning, we could say each one for himself, "I have the judgment before me!" Well were it for us if ere we lie down to rest at night we could each one say, "I have the judgment awaiting me!" Well were it for us if, before each duty we undertake each recreation, each exertion, in whatever way, of our responsibility as men or Christians, we could remind ourselves of what is the real state of the case by saying, "We shall one day have to give an account of this; I have to face the day of judgment." Surely this must, if anything can, make us tender in our thoughts of others

and severe in our decisions respecting ourselves. Surely in this new outlook upon life we have a warning against the insolence which is but a concentrated association of self and the scorn which is impossible, when we have sounded the pathos of every single human existence, and the light-hearted indifference, which means absence of all serious thought whatever respecting the deepest things in human life and destiny. Ah! we could not bear to think steadily of human history or of human life around us, or of our own unfathomable hopes or fears in the light of the coming day of God, if it were not for the eternal mercy manifest in our Lord Jesus Christ, God and man incarnate, crucified, risen, ascended for us men, and for our salvation. We know that His mercy is over all His works, though we cannot trace its operation among the intricacies of stubborn or reluctant wills; we know that He hateth nothing that He has made; that He forgives the sins of all that are penitent, though we do not know in whom, by His grace, there has been created new and contrite hearts. But in the light which comes from His cross and from His throne—in His light we may see light, and the thought of judgment, which is certainly terrible, is indeed welcome when we reflect that our Judge is our Saviour, and that He is as ready as ever to help His servants, whom He has redeemed with His precious blood.

Churching of Women.

Is there, in bowers of endless spring,
One known from all the seraph band
By softer voice, by smile and wing
More exquisitely bland!

Here let him speed: to-day this hallowed air
Is fragrant with a mother's first and fondest prayer.

Only let Heaven her fire impart,
No richer incense breathes on earth:
"A spouse with all a daughter's heart,"
Fresh from the perilous birth,
To the great Father lifts her pale glad eye,
Like a reviving flower when storms are hushed on high.

O what a treasure of sweet thought
Is here! what hope and joy and love
All in one tender bosom brought,
For the all-gracious Dove
To brood o'er silently, and form for Heaven
Each passionate wish and dream to dear affection given.

Her fluttering heart, too keenly blest,
Would sicken, but she leans on Thee,
Sees Thee by faith on Mary's breast,
And breathes serene and free.
Slight tremblings only of her veil declare[1]
Soft answers duly whispered to each soothing prayer.

We are too weak, when Thou dost bless,
To bear the joy—help, Virgin-born!
By Thine own mother's first caress,
That waked Thy natal morn!
Help, by the unexpressive smile, that made
A Heaven on earth around the couch where Thou wast laid!

[1] "When the woman comes to this office, the rubric (as it was altered at the last review) directs that she be *decently apparelled*, i.e., as the custom and order was formerly, *with a white covering* or *veil*." Wheatly on the Common Prayer, c. xiii. sect. i. 3.

A MOTHER'S INFLUENCE.

It is as a mother that a woman exercises her vast, her decisive influence over human society. No office that a man can fill, no influence that he can command, is comparable to that of a mother who understands what God has made her by the appointments of nature. How little can a father do towards forming the mind and character of young children, busy as he is in winning bread for the household, and constitutionally wanting in the subtle and ever-active instincts which incessantly play around a mother's heart! All who have studied human nature most closely will agree that during those years when thought and purpose are being shaped most easily and with the most lasting results, the mother's influence is supreme. The character of a family is, as a rule, determined by that of the mother; the character of the nation is in the hands of the successive generations of mothers; the most remarkable men who have appeared on the stage of human life have owed that which was most characteristic in them to a mother's influence, exerted when thought and affection and will were still plastic and impressible. This is probably one reason why the names of the mothers of the Kings of Judah and Israel are so frequently given in the Kings and Chronicles; they were otherwise unknown women, but their contemporaries could trace their influence in the characters, good or evil, of the men who successively controlled the destinies of the sacred people.

And what is the instrument by which the mother, from age to age, asserts this great, this unrivalled power, in shaping the heart and thought of the generations of mankind? It is love,—natural affection as we call it,—manifested in its tenderest and intensest form. This is

the sceptre which secures to woman her true, her unassailable, her imperial position in human life and society. If man reflects, among created things, however faintly, the uncreated intelligence of God, woman reflects that which is, in Holy Scripture, more closely identified with God's inmost nature even than His intelligence; she is a ray of His love, that is, of His essential self, who as "God, is love." It is as a mother that she brings to a focus this characteristic power; a power to which nothing else in nature will really compare.

A MOTHER'S LESSON.

A careful mother or teacher will treat a child's mind with great tenderness and reverence. She will be careful to excite interest before gratifying it; and to gratify it in such degree as her child's capacity may admit. She will not think of the mind of her child as of a large bag, into which all the odds and ends of knowledge that are swept up from the table of common life may be thrown at random, but as a delicate and beautiful organism, to be handled with tenderness and respect, since one mistake in dealing with it may be fatal. A well-known writer has told us how she was taught by her mother the nature and attributes of God. "I asked her one day who God was, and was told to come again the next day, and at the same hour. I came again, and repeated the question, "Who is God?" and was again told to wait another day before I could be answered. And then, when my curiosity had been raised to the highest pitch, and my sense of the importance of the subject immensely enhanced by this repeated postponement of an answer, I came once more, and my mother explained in words which I have never forgotten, how

great and awful, and beautiful a being God is; and what He has told us about His attributes, and His relations to the world and to us, and all this in simple words, and so far as a child's mind could bear it."[1] Certainly such a lesson as that no child was likely to forget.

Commination.

THE prayers are o'er; why slumberest thou so long,
Thou voice of sacred song?
Why swell'st thou not, like breeze from mountain cave,
High o'er the echoing nave,
The white-robed priest, as otherwhile, to guide
Up to the Altar's northern side?—
A mourner's tale of shame and sad decay
Keeps back our glorious sacrifice to-day:

The widowed Spouse of Christ: with ashes crowned,
Her Christmas robes unbound,
She lingers in the porch for grief and fear,
Keeping her penance drear—
O is it nought to you? that idly gay,
Or coldly proud, ye turn away?
But if her warning tears in vain be spent,
Lo to her altered eye the Law's stern fires are lent.

Each awful curse, that on mount Ebal rang,
Peals with a direr clang
Out of that silver trump, whose tones of old
Forgiveness only told.

[1] Mrs. Schimmelpenninck; quoted from memory.

And who can blame the mother's fond affright,[1]
Who sporting on some giddy height
Her infant sees, and springs with hurried hand
To snatch the rover from the dangerous strand?

But surer than all words the silent spell
(So Grecian legends tell)
When to her bird, too early 'scaped the nest,
She bares her tender breast,
Smiling he turns and spreads his little wing,
There to glide home, there to safely cling.
So yearns our mother o'er each truant son,
So softly falls the lay in fear and wrath begun.

Wayward and spoiled she knows ye: the keen blast,
That braced her youth, is past:
The rod of discipline, the robe of shame—
She bears them in your name:
Only return and love. But ye perchance
Are deeper plunged in sorrow's trance:
Your God forgives, but ye no comfort take
Till ye have scourged the sins that in your conscience ache.

O heavy-laden soul! kneel down and hear
Thy penance in calm fear:
With thine own lips to sentence all thy sin;
Then, by the judge within
Absolved, in thankful sacrifice to part
For ever with thy sullen heart,
Nor on remorseful thoughts to brood, and stain
The glory of the Cross, forgiven and cheered in vain.

[1] Alluding to a beautiful anecdote in the Greek Anthology, tom. i. 180, ed. Jacobs. See "Pleasures of Memory," p. 133.

THE PATIENCE OF GOD.

What is the true lesson of these enlarged ideas of time in relation to the history of the material universe with which modern knowledge has made us familiar?—periods so vast that imagination cannot grasp, that numbers seem at times unequal to express them; periods of which the strata of the earth beneath our feet, the movements of the stars and suns above our heads, and such phenomena as the passage of light, afford us but passing glimpses. Incalculable periods these, which must have surely elapsed since the moment when He, who had already lived in perfect blessedness for an eternity in His self-sufficing solitude, willed to surround Himself with created things, and during which He must have surveyed the slow alternations of growth and decay, the measured preparations for the gradual emergence of the higher forms of life, with the tranquil comprehension of all that lay potentially in the unshapen, undeveloped masses before Him! What, I ask, do these periods most of all suggest? The patience of God. Or what is the lesson of His relation with our race, which started on its career by abusing that very faculty of free-will which was designed to enable it to render a perfect service? What is the lesson of the history of nations, empires, nay, of the people of revelation, the Jews, so pre-eminent in their knowledge of the true account of man and of the Being who made him, so pre-eminent in their disloyalty, in their unfaithfulness, in their scorn? Surely, as their own Psalms say again and again, the patience of God.

And what is the secret, think you, of the long delay of the Redemption, of the partial success and of the many failures of the Christian Church? Of its present

failure to comprise more than one-third of the human family? Of its divisions, of its losses, I had almost permitted myself to say, of its ruin?

> "The sheep were browsing in the sacred hall,
> Which once had echoed to the choral song;
> And the old, wandering river seemed to call
> On ancient memories; and the mountain throng
> Stood by in solemn consciousness. Among
> Rent walls the wildflowers hung
> Through blinded view
> Of arches and tall piles in ruins strong;
> And beautiful there shone celestial blue."

Ah! what was that blue but "the patience of God"?

Or, once more, what do our lives suggest, yours and mine, more than anything else when we think of the gifts which He has given us, of the years during which He has spared us, of the little or nothing which we have done for Him, of the ways or misuse or abuse of His favours which have marked our path from childhood until now? Oh, surely, "the patience of God!" "The Lord is long-suffering, and of tender mercy."

Yes, patience is strength, and patience is wisdom; and is it really needed less by us of to-day than by our predecessors of eighteen centuries ago? Is not patience the very law of your conquests in science, those revelations of new powers in nature which from time to time astonish the world? Those discoveries, which make man's power over the conditions of his existence sensibly greater than they ever were before, have been prepared for, are being prepared for, by a group of moral and intellectual virtues under the presidency of patience —patience which neglects no facts, patience which is wearied by no disappointments, patience which aspires, which controls, which combines all the groups of workers that obey her. And is not patience—I will not dare to

say the law—the hope of your art? Why does our architecture at its very best fall far short of those great creations of days when our forefathers had neither our knowledge, nor our wealth, nor our mechanical resources? There may be more answers to that question than one, but one is, that we have not the patience which is needed for these splendid efforts. It took a century to build the old St. Paul's, and we are rather ill-satisfied if we do not see any building that we take in hand finished within a few years of our own lifetime. For our ancestors it was enough to contribute each his little part towards a mighty whole, which in its completeness he did not hope to see. We care more to see what we attempt in its completeness than to forego our personal satisfaction for the sake of the grandeur of our work, and our work is dwarfed and impoverished accordingly.

Forms of Prayer to be used at Sea.

When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee.
—*Isaiah* xliii. 2.

THE shower of moonlight falls as still and clear
Upon the desert main,
As where sweet flowers some pastoral garden cheer
With fragrance after rain:
The wild winds rustle in the piping shrouds,
As in the quivering trees:
Like summer fields, beneath the shadowy clouds
The yielding waters darken in the breeze.

Thou too art here with thy soft inland tones,
Mother of our new birth;
The lonely ocean learns thy orisons,
And loves thy sacred mirth:

When storms are high, or when the fires of war
Come lightening round our course,
Thou breath'st a note like music from afar,
Tempering rude hearts with calm angelic force.

Far, far away, the homesick seaman's hoard,
Thy fragrant tokens live,
Like flower-leaves in a precious volume stored,
To solace and relieve
Some heart too weary of the restless world;
Or like thy sabbath Cross,
That o'er the brightening billow streams unfurled,
Whatever gale the labouring vessel toss.

O kindly soothing in high Victory's hour,
Or when a comrade dies,
In whose sweet presence Sorrow dares not lower,
Nor expectation rise
Too high for earth; what mother's heart could spare
To the cold cheerless deep
Her flower and hope? but thou art with him there,
Pledge of the untired arm and eye that cannot sleep:

The eye that watches o'er wild Ocean's dead,
Each in his coral cave,
Fondly as if the green turf wrapt his head
Fast by his father's grave.—
One moment, and the seeds of life shall spring
Out of the waste abyss,
And happy warriors triumph with their King
In worlds without a sea,[1] unchanging orbs of bliss.

[1] And there was no more sea. *Revelation* xxi. 1.

THE TWO COMINGS OF CHRIST.

On Advent Sunday we are face to face with the two comings of Christ. His first coming is a matter of history. He has been here in person, or by His Spirit and His representatives, for nearly nineteen centuries. His second coming is, as far as the date goes, as much a matter of uncertainty now as it was in the days of His apostles. We cannot say, "Lo, here!" or, "Lo there!" —"It will be to-day," or "It will be a thousand years hence." We only know this—that He whose words shall not pass away, has said that He will come, and that though He tarry, it is our business to wait for Him, since He will surely come and will not tarry. The question for us is, when He does come, whether in death or in judgment, will He find us among the hostile, or the curious, or the imitative, or the faithful? What is our personal relation towards His first advent and its momentous consequences now? During our few remaining years, or months, or weeks of life, are we to be interested in religion only as we might be interested in any political question of the day? Are we secretly jealous of it? Is it merely a matter of fashion with us, in which we follow the taste of others, without personal convictions of our own? Or have we, indeed, found out that Jesus Christ is to us what no other is or can be,—our one real instructor in the highest truth,—our lawful and most indulgent Master, who has a right to the control of our secret wills as well as our outward actions,—our priest, as well as our teacher and king, whose death, blessed be His mercy for it, is a sacrifice of unending power,—whose blood to the end of time cleanses from all sin? They who know this live, as it were, between the two Advents, rejoicing in the graces and the blessings of the

first,—looking forward, if not without awe, yet certainly without terror, to the approach of the second. They it is who accompany Christ in His procession across the ages, with their festival songs, strewing His path with the best offerings that they can make, waving on high, amid a world which is curious, or angry, or imitative by turns, their palms of victory. In one or other of these classes we, too, must be, if we have seen something of Jesus Christ. And at His entry into any soul all its faculties are moved. At the approach of this blessed and awful visitant, for good or for evil, in homage or in hatred, the understanding, the will, the affections, the imagination, are all of them aroused. They must, perforce, in the last resort, blaspheme, if they have not the grace to adore. The religion of curiosity, the religion of imitation, soon resolve themselves into one of the two permanent attitudes of the soul towards its highest object—love or aversion.

The Accession.

As I was with Moses, so I will be with thee: I will not fail thee, nor forsake thee.—*Joshua* i. 5.

THE voice that from the glory came
To tell how Moses died unseen,
And waken Joshua's spear of flame
To victory on the mountains green,
Its trumpet tones are sounding still,
When Kings or Parents pass away,
They greet us with a cheering thrill
Of power and comfort in decay.

Behind the soft bright summer cloud
That makes such haste to melt and die
Our wistful gaze is oft allowed
A glimpse of the unchanging sky:
Let storm and darkness do their worst;
For the lost dream the heart may ache,
The heart may ache, but may not burst:
Heaven will not leave thee nor forsake.

One rock amid the weltering floods,
One torch in a tempestuous night,
One changeless pine in fading woods:
Such is the thought of Love and Might,
True Might and ever-present Love,
When Death is busy near the throne,
And Sorrow her keen sting would prove
On Monarchs orphaned and alone.

In that lorn hour and desolate,
Who could endure a crown? but He,
Who singly bore the world's sad weight,
Is near, to whisper, "Lean on Me:
Thy days of toil, thy nights of care,
Sad lonely dreams in crowded hall,
Darkness within, while pageants glare
Around—the Cross supports them all."

O Promise of undying Love!
While Monarchs seek thee for repose,
Far in the nameless mountain cove
Each pastoral heart thy bounty knows.
Ye, who in place of shepherds true
Come trembling to their awful trust,
Lo here the fountain to imbue
With strength and hope your feeble dust.

Not upon Kings or Priests alone
The power of that dear word is spent;
It chants to all in softest tone
The lowly lesson of Content:
Heaven's light is poured on high and low;
To high and low Heaven's Angel spake;
"Resign thee to thy weal or woe,
I ne'er will leave thee nor forsake."

THE GREAT LAW OF SERVICE.

Service is written everywhere, for those who have eyes to see, on the face of creation. The service of unconscious law; the service of sentient life; the service of rational and free beings; the service of the splendid and illuminated intelligences around the Throne,—these are the steps in the ascent. But between the purely material bodies to which God has given a law that it should not be broken, and those majestic and spiritual ministers of His who do His pleasure in the highest realms of created life, there is the bond of this universal and constraining law, which holds all things created in subjection to the will of the Great Creator. The same witness is borne by the faculties of the soul of man. Man is free: but he can only preserve his true freedom by a voluntary service. His reason, his affections, his will cannot dispose of themselves capriciously with entire impunity. Truth, beauty, goodness, these are the objects of their rightful service; and what are these but aspects of the Eternal God? Believe that all truth is unattainable, and the ruin of the understanding is only a question of time. Treat moral beauty as a mere fancy, and the degradation of the affections must quickly follow. Decide that right and wrong are only phases of human feeling, and the

unnerved will must ere long forfeit all that gives it directness and strength. It is only in the service of high ideals that the soul of man can attain its excellence; and when these are renounced man does not escape from service, he only changes masters, and that for the worse. He falls back under the empire of sense or of nature, and he finds in the depths of his degradation the justification of the law against which he has rebelled.

Ordination.

After this, the congregation shall be desired, secretly in their prayers, to make their humble supplications to God for all these things: for the which prayers there shall be silence kept for a space.
After which shall be sung or said by the Bishop (the persons to be ordained Priests all kneeling), "Veni, Creator Spiritus."
—*Rubric in the Office for Ordering of Priests.*

'Twas silence in Thy temple, Lord,
When slowly through the hallowed air,
The spreading cloud of incense soared,
Charged with the breath of Israel's prayer.

'Twas silence round Thy throne on high,
When the last wondrous seal unclosed,[1]
And in the portals of the sky,
Thine armies awfully reposed.

And this deep pause, that o'er us now
Is hovering—comes it not of Thee?

[1] When He had opened the seventh seal, there was silence in Heaven about the space of half an hour.—*Revelation* viii. 1.

Is it not like a Mother's vow,
When with her darling on her knee,

She weighs and numbers o'er and o'er
Love's treasure hid in her fond breast,
To cull from that exhaustless store
The dearest blessing and the best?

And where shall Mother's bosom find,
With all its deep love-learnèd skill,
A prayer so sweetly to her mind,
As, in this sacred hour and still,

Is wafted from the white-robed choir,
Ere yet the pure high-breathèd lay,
"Come, Holy Ghost, our souls inspire,"
Rise floating on its dove-like way.

And when it comes, so deep and clear
The strain, so soft the melting fall,
It seems not to the entrancèd ear
Less than thine own heart-cheering call,

Spirit of Christ—Thine earnest given
That these our prayers are heard, and they
Who grasp, this hour, the sword of Heaven,
Shall feel Thee on their weary way.

Oft as at morn or soothing eve
Over the holy Fount they lean,
Their fading garland freshly weave,
Or fan them with Thine airs serene.

Spirit of Light and Truth! to Thee
We trust them in that musing hour,

Till they, with open heart and free,
Teach all Thy word in all its power.

When foemen watch their tents by night,
And mists hang wide o'er moor and fell,
Spirit of Counsel and of Might,
Their pastoral warfare guide Thou well.

And O! when worn and tired they sigh
With that more fearful war within,
When Passion's storms are loud and high,
And brooding o'er remembered sin,

The heart dies down—O mightiest then,
Come ever true, come ever near,
And wake their slumbering love again,
Spirit of God's most holy Fear!

THE ENTHUSIASM OF EARLY MANHOOD.

Our Lord's words suggest many lessons, but one of especial and incontrovertible importance: reverence for the presence and work of the Holy Spirit. Reverence for Him—in the Bible which He inspires; in the Church which He governs and sanctifies; in the souls, whether thy own or another's, which He deigns to tenant. It is easy to become familiar with the outward tokens of His presence; to use language which has no meaning apart from Him; to forget that He is the Lord and Giver of Life, without whom Holy Scripture, the Church, the New Birth, the New Life would be empty phrases. If nature is full of interest and wonder; if the bodily frame which we inhabit, like the sea or the

sky, are ever presenting to us new material for thought; much more is this the case with the mysterious depths of the human soul. And few things, perhaps, weigh more heavily on those of us who know that life is already on the wane, and that the greater number of the years for which we shall answer hereafter must have already passed, than the recollection which at times steals over us, of that almost unnoticed multitude of thoughts, feelings, aspirations, pointing upwards and onwards, which have presented themselves in the presence-chamber of the soul, and then have vanished away, and left no trace behind. Whence came they? Those glimpses of nobler truth, those sudden cravings after a higher existence, those fretful uneasy yearnings, full of wholesome dissatisfaction with self, those whisperings, those voices, which would not for a while allow us to rest, but which, as the years have passed—is it not often thus?—have died away into silence—whence came they? and whither should they have led us on? Ah! we have said to ourselves, or the world has said to us, that the foolish enthusiasm of youth has passed, and that with middle age we have succeeded to common sense and to ripe discretion. It may be so, but there is, at least in some cases, another way of reading the result. It is possible that something more than fervid indiscretion has been lost with youth; that the bloom of the soul, the freshness and tenderness of the conscience, has been succeeded by a condition of thought and feeling, the true character of which we conceal from ourselves and from others when we label it "discretion" and "common sense." Depend upon it, my younger brethren, the bright self-sacrificing enthusiasms of early manhood are among the most precious things in the whole course of human life. They may have their illusions, but they have their safeguards

also ; and when they emancipate us from all that would force us down, when they clear the spirit's eye and nerve the bodily arm, when they enable us to tread under our feet some clinging mischief which has made us wretched for years, and open out horizons of disinterested effort from which we already draw the inspiration of a higher life, surely we do well to cherish them.

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